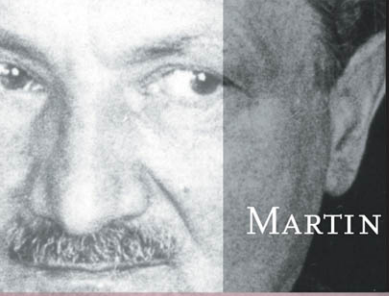
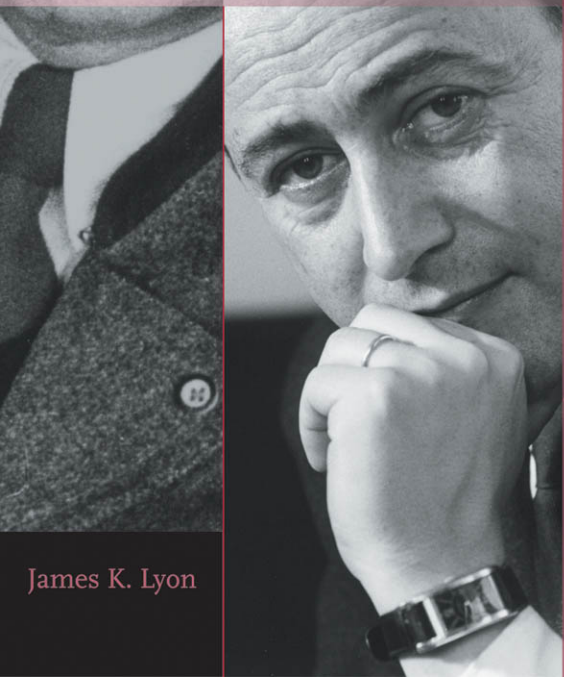


Paul Celan & Martin Heidegger

An Unresolved Conversation, 1951–1970



James K. Lyon

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Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger

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Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger

An Unresolved Conversation, 1951–1970

JAMES K. LYON

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The 1967 encounter between Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger stands as a landmark in the intellectual history of the twentieth century. In a flood that shows no signs of diminishing, there are books, essays in edited volumes, documentary collections, scholarly articles, sections in doctoral dissertations, and scores of shorter references that interpret this meeting between a Jewish Holocaust survivor—whose poetry, George Steiner claims, "is to be included with the very greatest in Western literature"[1]—and Heidegger, one of the most original and influential thinkers of the twentieth century, who had joined the National Socialist German Workers' (Nazi) Party in 1933.

Contrary to received critical opinion, Celan's meeting with Heidegger was probably not the most dramatic or important event in the poet's life, and it was certainly not the most important in Heidegger's. But the dissonant nature of a relationship that spanned nearly twenty years between two figures of extraordinary stature who appeared so diametrically opposed stretches the imagination and begs for explanation, especially if its significant impact on Celan is considered. This reason alone invites examination of the context in which their meeting occurred.

Because little information about Celan's overall relationship to Heidegger has been available until recently, critics seldom mention this broader context. It is not widely known, for example, that the poet began reading Heidegger in 1951 and borrowed concepts and metaphors that he entered into his own writings or that he continued reading and engaging the thinker's works until the very end of his life in 1970, well after their allegedly ill-fated meeting in 1967. Nor are most critics aware that Celan's library shows evidence of his reading carefully more than two dozen works by Heidegger or that the thinker played a decisive role in helping him formulate his own poetic theories. Scholars also have not realized that the men corresponded over a period of years and that Celan sent copies of his po-

etry to Heidegger. Finally, there have been few attempts to analyze how highly this thinker esteemed Celan's poetry; how eagerly he attempted to encourage and promote him (for example, by trying to secure a teaching position for him at a German university); how many copies of his own writings with handwritten dedications he sent to Celan in an attempt to approach him (at least ten); and how frustrated he was at his inability to "connect" with or help the disturbed poet.

Early in 2004 (soon after the present manuscript was submitted for publication), Hadrien France-Lanord's book *Paul Celan et Martin Heidegger: Le sens d'un dialogue* appeared in Paris. Drawing on works by Heidegger that Celan owned and read, France-Lanord examines some elements of their intellectual dialogue. Philosophical, speculative, and biographically incomplete, France-Lanord's book makes no attempt to examine coherently the cultural contexts of the two men's relationship or the literary impulses Celan drew from Heidegger. Nor does it profess to analyze the human complexity of this troubled attraction of opposites.

By contrast, in this volume I examine the relevant evidence available to date in an attempt to give a more complete version of the largely untold story of this relationship. Even at present that story is admittedly incomplete, since at least two major collections of Celan's letters in which he refers to Heidegger are still off limits to scholars—those to Ingeborg Bachmann and those to Klaus Demus. Nevertheless, this study provides an overview that can serve as a starting point for further exploration of their troubled connections, interactions, and responses to each other—two immensely gifted creative minds who shared more affinities in their thinking than their radically different national, social, and cultural backgrounds would suggest. Given that the poet drew far more from Heidegger than the thinker did from him, the primary focus of this study will be on Celan. In general it is conceived as a historical and intellectual biography of him vis-à-vis Heidegger and an analysis of the contradictory and dissonant elements that marked their relationship. It also examines how Celan read, responded to, rejected, accepted, or modified Heidegger's thinking by "translating" his readings into his own works, so there will be some analysis and interpretation of Celan's poetry. In part because Heidegger's engagement with Celan is not as well documented, but primarily because their teacher-pupil relationship was heavily one-sided in the direction of the learner, the focus on Heidegger will not be quite as intensive or extensive.

In the complex development that Celan underwent before their first meeting in 1967, Heidegger, who until 1959 served largely as an unwitting mentor and object of the younger man's adulation, also unwittingly became a target for the younger man's anger and hostility toward all former Nazis. This study will at-

tempt to contextualize their historic encounter in 1967 and show how limited knowledge about what preceded and followed it has led to misunderstandings and distortions of a relationship that began years earlier as an imaginary dialogue with Heidegger.

As a fundamental principle, I have tried wherever possible to describe and analyze this topic on the basis of documented sources. The study of a relationship between a Holocaust survivor and a prominent thinker who had joined the Nazi Party in 1933, which in Celan's eyes stigmatized him as an inveterate, lifelong Nazi, offers a tantalizing invitation to speculate and psychoanalyze. I have resisted this impulse. Drawing on documentary evidence, memoirs, and the oral reports of informants who, as far as I have been able to determine, are reliable, I have attempted to establish a concrete basis for analysis and interpretation. For example, I do not follow the common practice of connecting words or concepts in Celan's poems to works by Heidegger unless there is concrete evidence that Celan had read those particular works. This is not to say he could not have read other works by Heidegger beyond those known to have been in his library (listed in the appendix). It only means that I am unwilling to admit this kind of speculation as evidence when there is an abundance of concrete information on what he did read and respond to. When my analysis appears to become speculative, I identify it as such and base it on what seems to be compelling documentary material.

Another limitation has been imposed on this study. Though it centers on the problematic relationship of a Holocaust survivor to a former Nazi, I do not enter the tangled thicket surrounding Heidegger's culpability for his behavior during the Third Reich. I am acquainted with the extensive literature that condemns him for his actions, as well as with other material that seems to mitigate at least partially what he himself admitted was a dreadful political mistake. I personally can add little to the debate, however, and focus only on Celan's perception of Heidegger, who for him was clearly complicit with the Nazis and their ideology. In part it seems Celan wanted to condemn Heidegger for his past, but, perhaps more important, he wanted from Heidegger, whom he greatly admired, an explanation of what to Celan were inexplicable actions.

What some also may consider a limitation of this study is the question—which I do not answer to my satisfaction and probably not to that of many readers—of what drew Celan to someone who in many ways was his polar opposite. I have not so much refused to answer this question as I have concluded that it probably cannot be answered. Initially I thought there might be plausible answers, and I even propose some tentative ones here. But the contradictions that became evident as my work progressed are so glaring and irreconcilable that any

answer ultimately fails to capture the complexity of a relationship between two men who rank among the most complicated human beings in the twentieth century. Hence I have tried to work out and analyze the contradictions rather than trying to resolve them.

Several considerations determined my use of translations. Even in German, much of Celan's and Heidegger's language usage is unique and can be understood only by grasping the peculiar idiom of each man. And, of course, some of their language is virtually untranslatable or, at best, highly resistant to translation. In order to allow comparison with the specific wording in their original texts, all citations from their works appear in English translation, followed by the original German or French. All other citations from foreign-language sources appear only in English translation.

Existing translations of Celan and Heidegger into English have a wide range of quality, a number of significant gaps, and differing degrees of availability. For these reasons I have translated most passages from Celan and Heidegger myself. Though I often relied on the work of others, especially John Felstiner's excellent renderings of Celan's work, where I felt compelled to alter more than one word of someone else's English version, I take full responsibility for the result. In those cases where I do use a previous translation, the translator is clearly identified and credited. Otherwise citations without a named source are my own. In reproducing Heideggerian terms, I generally follow what has become accepted usage in English (for example, *Rede* = discourse, *Gerede* = idle talk or conversation, *Ereignis* = event of appropriation, *Unverborgenheit* = unconcealment, and so forth). Consonant with established practice, my text also retains the word *Dasein* in this form in English texts. And to avoid the discrepancies that exist among English titles of Heidegger's works in translation or when cited by his interpreters, I have followed the titles produced by Ewald Osers in his preface to the English translation of Rüdiger Safranski's *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*.

Exceptional kindness by many individuals and institutions contributed to this book. I am indebted to Doris Allemann, Robert André, Jean Bollack, Bernhard Böschenstein, Rolf Bücher, Richard Hacken, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Martin Schäfer, and the staff of the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach (Germany) for assistance and support in gathering and evaluating material relating to Celan and Heidegger. My thanks also go to Edward Cutler, Steven Sondrup, and Mark Wrathall, my colleagues at Brigham Young University, for reading parts or all of the manuscript and making useful comments and suggestions. I owe much to Axel Gellhaus, general editor of the major Celan edition, *Werke:*

Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, and a leading Celan expert, for supporting my work in several ways, including the opportunity to present some preliminary findings at a Celan-Heidegger symposium at the University of Hamburg in 2001. I am equally indebted to my friend and colleague John Felstiner, whose literary biography of Celan and translations of his poetry and prose have become standard works in the English-language reception of the poet.

The efforts of my friend and colleague Hans-Wilhelm Kelling, who spent large amounts of time cheerfully assisting me in deciphering almost unintelligible documents by Heidegger and Celan, and Joseph Baumgarten, my research assistant, who tracked down dozens of obscure clues and lightened my burden with technical advice in preparing the manuscript, also deserve more than casual appreciation. And the College of Humanities at Brigham Young University provided me with ample funds for travel and books by awarding me the Scheuber-Veinz endowed professorship.

Bertrand Badiou, Eric Celan (the poet's son), Hermann Heidegger (the philosopher's son), and Werner Weber gave me access to or personally provided me with original documents and photos relating to my topic. And Hermann Heidegger made a number of useful suggestions for improving the book. To each of these I express my thanks for exceptional kindness on a personal level, as well as for materials that I otherwise would not have seen. In correspondence and interviews over the course of more than thirty years Klaus Demus, one of Celan's most intimate early friends in Vienna and Paris, has been extraordinarily cordial and extremely helpful. He, too, deserves my heartfelt gratitude. But I reserve my deepest thanks for a bibliographer and two mentors.

The bibliographer, Jerry Glenn, also a noted Celan scholar, has spent decades gathering bibliographic information on Celan from dozens of languages. His bibliographies, and especially his answers to my repeated queries, have made it possible for me to barely keep my head above the flood of secondary literature that threatens to engulf anyone working on Celan. He deserves much, much more than these words of gratitude. The second, who counts as something of a mentor, is someone I have never met but without whose works this study could not have been written. Over the past decade Barbara Wiedemann's pioneering editing and writing of works by and about Celan have brought to light more primary documents, including letters and notebooks, and more biographical information generally than were known in the decades preceding her publications. I express my gratitude to her for what she has taught me. Furthermore, after reading my manuscript, she made a number of useful suggestions that have improved the book considerably. Finally, I am indebted to Otto Pöggeler, perhaps the best living

informant on Celan's relationship to Heidegger, who granted me interviews, corresponded with me, and published more specifically on events in Celan's life than anyone else with firsthand knowledge. Despite the uncertainty sometimes associated with memory, he has proven to be a generally reliable and accurate informant and an unusually gracious and helpful human being. I express my gratitude to him for enlarging my understanding of Celan's relationship to Heidegger.

A Note on Citations and Abbreviations

Unless otherwise noted, all German citations from Celan and Heidegger refer to the following editions:

Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke in fünf Bänden*, ed. Beda Allemann, Stefan Reichert, and Rolf Bücher (Frankfurt a.M., 1983). Although more recent editions of single works by Celan have appeared, this is the most accessible and comprehensive collection of individual works that he himself prepared for print in his lifetime.

Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe: Ausgabe letzter Hand*, general editor Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann (Frankfurt a.M., 1979–). This standard edition, which is projected to include 102 volumes, remains incomplete, with new volumes continuing to appear at irregular intervals.

In every case citations from these volumes will be identified at the end of a cited passage—*GW* for Celan's *Gesammelte Werke*, *G* for Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*—by volume and page number. Hence a citation from Celan followed by "*GW* 3:110" refers to a poem found in volume three, page 110 of the above edition. A citation from Heidegger followed by "*G* 12:175, 193, 207" refers to volume 12, pages 175, 193, and 207 of the Heidegger edition.

Celan's "Meridian" speech and the large collection of notes on which it was partially based both use the word *Meridian* as the main title word. To avoid confusion, in the text I use quotation marks to refer to the speech ("Meridian") and an italicized title to designate the book in which Celan's collection of notes is published (*Meridian*). Page numbers referring to this book will be preceded by the abbreviation *DM*, which stands for the German title *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien*.

All citations from Celan's notebooks on his readings in Heidegger will be identified by the letter *B*, followed by a page number. This letter refers to *La Bibliothèque philosophique (Die philosophische Bibliothek): Catalogue raisonné des Annotations*.

Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger

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The Repulsion and Attraction of Opposites

It is difficult to imagine two more antithetical figures in twentieth-century cultural life than Paul Celan (1920–1970) and Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). The former, perhaps the most important poet in any Western language since 1945, was everything Heidegger was not. A Romanian-born Jew whose real name was Antschel (Ancel), he grew up speaking German as his cultural language but was multilingual. Until the end of his life he was wracked by guilt at having survived the Holocaust while his parents and extended family did not. Geographically he lived as an exile in Paris, but spiritually he was homeless and spent most of his adult life in a mental state that might be described as "extraterritorial." He told a poet friend in Paris that "you are at home, inside your reference points and language, but I'm outside."[1] His political ideology situated him on the left, but he refused to affiliate with any party. Though profoundly earnest, he also loved circuses and reveled in puns and witty wordplays. Deeply paranoid, he was suspicious of the postwar German cultural establishment, which he saw dominated by former Nazis, but he also tried desperately to obtain its acceptance in order to gain recognition of his poetry.

By contrast Heidegger, perhaps the best-known, most influential thinker of the century, was an arch-German nationalist. George Steiner speaks of his career "with its rootedness in one place."[2] Those roots were in the soil and traditions of his native Swabia, for which he displayed a public loyalty by wearing the stocking cap of the Alemannic peasantry and preferring the seclusion of writing in his ski hut high in the Black Forest to a prestigious chair at the University of Berlin, which he turned down. He considered Germany the only legitimate heir to the culture of ancient Greece and saw himself as a self-appointed perpetuator and mediator of that tradition. And his profoundly earnest thinking and personal life appear to have been void of humor. Wanting to revolutionize higher learn-

ing in Germany, he became rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933, issued a call for a rebirth of the German university under the Nazi banner, and joined the Nazi Party. Despite differences with the regime that caused him to step down as rector after less than one year, he remained a member of the party until 1945. He displayed no public signs of guilt or remorse for his Nazi past and, with a few minor exceptions, during and after World War II remained silent on the Holocaust and the persecution of Jews in his homeland.

Compounding the paradox of Celan's relation to this German thinker was the fact that most of his acknowledged intellectual and spiritual mentors were Jewish. Among his most intimate literary soul mates were Franz Kafka, Nelly Sachs, and especially Ossip Mandelstam, to whom he felt a special kinship. Jewish thinkers who drew him included Gustav Landauer, Karl Kraus, Sigmund Freud, Edmund Husserl, Franz Rosenzweig, Walter Benjamin, Martin Buber, Theodor Adorno, Gershom Sholem, Lev Shestov, and Emmanuel Levinas, to mention the most prominent. Though he also found certain non-Jewish German-language poets attractive, primarily Hölderlin, Trakl, and Rilke, not to mention the philosopher Nietzsche, most of those who shaped his world had, for the most part, little in common with Heidegger. Yet one strong affinity linked Celan to him and these other thinkers and writers, Jewish or non-Jewish: their strong interest in poetic language.

Ingeborg Bachmann Introduces Celan to Heidegger

Cut off during and after World War II from recent Western European letters and thought until he fled Romania and arrived in Vienna in December 1947, Celan's first exposure-by-hearsay to Heidegger probably came in 1948 through his friendship with the twenty-two-year-old poet Ingeborg Bachmann, whom he met there. At the time she was writing a doctoral dissertation on the critical reception of Heidegger's thought in Europe. By her own admission, she intended that this work would "dethrone" this "hidden king" of the Weimar Republic,[3] and she was naively confident that he would not survive her attack.[4] Besides infecting her new friend with her negative assessment of Heidegger's thought, she doubtless expanded on the philosopher's political stance during the Third Reich, for she had gathered information on it for her dissertation.[5] It is also possible that she introduced Celan at this time to Heidegger's famous inaugural speech "On the Self-Assertion of the German University," given in 1933 when he became rector of the University of Freiburg, which she claims that she knew.[6] At the very least Celan would have heard enough from her about Heidegger and his Nazi past

to have cast the German thinker in a dubious light. But she also must have expressed grudging admiration for at least some of Heidegger's thinking and influence,[7] an ambivalent attitude that Celan also later came to adopt.

Two examples make it clear that in spite of their strong misgivings, Celan and Bachmann continued a dialogue about Heidegger in their unpublished correspondence over the next years. According to a mutual friend, in 1950 Bachman gave Celan a copy of the thinker's book *Wrong Paths (Holzwege)*, which had been published earlier that year.[8] A copy of a 1950 first edition found in his posthumous library is probably the one she gave him, but he did not read it until 1953, perhaps a sign of his initial resistance to Heidegger. And according to Bachmann's biographer, in 1952 Celan sent her a copy (with a personal dedication) of Heidegger's essay "On the Essence of Reason" ("Vom Wesen des Grundes"), which is still in her posthumous library.[9] Clearly they had not dismissed him from their thinking, however else they might have felt about his activities in the Third Reich. Nevertheless, from what is known it appears that Celan avoided reading Heidegger's works for more than two years after being introduced to them in 1948.

What Bachmann could not realize when discussing Heidegger with Celan, and what he himself could not know, is that at this stage in his development as a poet, and without having read him, he was already a nascent Heideggerian. The language of a six-and-one-half-page prose piece he wrote during his six-month stay in Vienna entitled "Edgar Jené and the Dream of a Dream" ("Edgar Jené und der Traum vom Traum")[10] illustrates some reasons for this claim.

Celan, "The Dream of a Dream," and Heideggerian Diction

At the request of the painter Edgar Jené, the twenty-seven-year-old poet wrote the "Dream of a Dream" as an introduction to an exhibition of paintings by Jené, a surrealist artist whom Celan had met recently in Vienna. It also counts as one of his earliest attempts to formulate his own poetic theory. Structured as a fictitious conversation between an unidentified poet and his alter ego, who is portrayed as a friend, it takes place in a "deep sea" that is identified as the subconscious. In this conversation the speaker seeks to understand how poetic language can be renewed in an age when it has fallen victim to abuse, misuse, and overuse. He asks how that which "since time immemorial has struggled for expression" (seit unvordenklichen Zeiten nach Ausdruck rang, *GW* 3:157) can be cleansed of impurities and once again emerge in pristine form. Only after answering the question does the poet give a brief introduction and reactions to Jené's paintings.

Without his being aware of it, Celan uses diction that sounds as if he were appropriating Heidegger's. His concern with fundamental matters, which he expresses in the words *ground* or *reason* (Grund), *Being* (Sein), and "the alien death" (der fremde Tod), have a distinct Heideggerian ring and give the first intimations that the two share something in common. In using the German word *Grund,* Celan's act of going into the depths of the sea illustrates the seeking of this hidden "ground" or "reason." And his usage of *Being* within depths described as a "beautiful wilderness on the other, deeper side of Being" (die schöne Wildnis auf der anderen, tieferen Seite des Seins, *GW* 3:155) is a poetic description of a word that is central to Heidegger's entire project. In passages speculating on the nature of language, he also echoes other typical forms of Heideggerian diction with his generous use of noun abstractions derived from adjectives: "the authentic" (das Eigentliche), "the new" (das Neue), "the pure" (das Reine), "the timeless" (das Zeitlose), "the eternal" (das Ewige), or verbal or adjectival substantives without articles: "that which happened" (Geschehenes), "that which had been added" (Zusätzliches), "that which exists" (Gegebenes), "that which transforms" (Veränderndes), "that which is strange" (Fremdes), and "that which is the strangest" (Fremdeste). Some of Celan's jarring paradoxical formulations also sound as if they came straight from Heidegger: "The wall that divides today from tomorrow should be torn down, and tomorrow would again be yesterday" (Die Mauer, die Heute von Morgen trennt, sei niederzureißen und Morgen würde wieder Gestern sein, *GW* 3:156). And Celan follows another characteristic move in Heidegger's prose by coining new nouns from already existing words: "the Tomorrow-Yesterday" (Das Morgen-Gestern, *GW* 3:156). Although he clearly was not imitating a writer he had not yet read, such similarities in diction are a few of the elements that suggest a preexisting kinship to or affinity with certain aspects of Heidegger's language use. In a letter written the following year to a Dutch woman he had met in Paris, he also unwittingly uses a near-Heideggerian term to describe his own condition as one who is "thrown around" in the world (ein Herumgeworfener),[11] a slight variation on Heidegger's notion of the individual as one who is "thrown" (geworfen) into existence.

"Dream of a Dream" also anticipates common interests and themes Celan later discovered in Heidegger. One was the concept of time. Though not yet worked out in any detail, Celan's reflections on this concept emerge clearly in this short prose piece. Thematically and conceptually the notion of time goes on to become a fundamental element in his first three volumes of poetry, and it occupies a seminal place in his poetic theory as outlined in his 1960 "Meridian" speech.

In "Dream of a Dream" the poet's friend also speaks of returning to a type of pristine language "in which beginning and end converge" (In dieser Anschauung fielen Anfang und Ende zusammen, *GW* 3:156). He speculates on how to fuse yesterday and tomorrow and how to reach the condition of timelessness or eternity within our own time-bound existence (Was also sei zu tun in dieser unserer Zeit, um das Zeitlose, das Ewige, das Morgen-Gestern zu erreichen? *GW* 3:156). The substantive for "that which happened" (Geschehenes), one of Celan's later code words for the Third Reich and the Holocaust, also surfaces here for the first time in this discussion of time and timelessness. At this point his ruminations are still fuzzy, but later the concept becomes crucial when he opposes Heidegger's claims for the timelessness of a poem with his own view that a poem is bound to and must reflect "that which happened" in the recent past.

The overriding Heideggerian echo in this prose piece, however, both in diction and in content, is the poet's express exploration of the origins of poetic language, a topic that Heidegger discussed repeatedly in his later works where he saw the language of thinking and the language of poetry as arising from essentially the same source. Celan's speaker desires to rejuvenate or regenerate worn-out language by returning to its primeval origins. In the process he uses two of the same words that Heidegger, in his project to examine and understand Being, had already employed in *Being and Time* for his announced intention of recovering originary language—*primordial* and *primordialness* (ursprünglich, Ursprünglichkeit). In *What Is Called Thinking*, a later work, Heidegger openly admitted that his intention was also to revolutionize the German language so he could revolutionize thinking about Being (*G* 8:202). Without knowing this, Celan's speaker announces his revolutionary intent of cleansing language of the "slag of centuries of old lies about this world" (von der Schlacke der Jahrhunderte alter Lügen von dieser Welt, *GW* 3:156) in order to recover authentic poetic language. He sees all humans as "languishing in the chains of external reality" and "gagged" so they cannot speak (dass der Mensch nicht nur in den Ketten des äußeren Lebens schmachtete, sondern auch geknebelt war und nicht sprechen durfte, *GW* 3:157). His proclaimed goal is to recover originary language in order to liberate humankind from this "burden of a thousand years of false and distorted sincerity" (weil seine Worte . . . unter der tausendjährigen Last falscher und entstellter Aufrichtigkeit stöhnten, *GW* 3:157).

Even at this early point Celan's outlook on originary language had certain similarities with that of the later Heidegger. His poet-speaker asserts that to acquire primordial language requires "a return to an absolute naiveté . . . a primordial view" (die Rückkehr zu einer unbedingten Naivität . . . eine ursprüngliche Schau,

GW 3:156) and "a first-time seeing" (einer erstmaligen Schau, *GW* 3:158). Unbeknown to Celan at the time, Heidegger presents similar views on how some of the poets he discusses, especially Hölderlin and Trakl, brought primordial language to speech. When Celan's speaker also describes how "words and shapes, images and gestures" (Worte und Gestalten, Bilder und Gebärden, *GW* 3:153) "come" to the poet, he anticipates a claim he later discovered in Heidegger on how language "speaks to us" (der Zuspruch der Sprache), a concept he acknowledged as having its origin in the thinker's writings (see chapter 7). This passage then uses two signature Heideggerian words—*veiled* and *unveiled* (verschleiert, entschleiert)—to describe how these traces of primordial language present themselves (*GW* 3:157–158). They belong to a well-known word field of related opposites (covered-uncovered, hidden-revealed, and so forth) to which the thinker turned repeatedly in explicating his notion of the concealing and unconcealing function of truth, or *aletheia*. Again Celan had no way of knowing how closely his own words or concepts approached Heidegger's, but the similarities are striking.

The same passage also describes in imaginative terms how the interplay of primordial language elements that "come" to the poet collide and generate light—"the spark of the miraculous," a "new brightness" that exists "beyond the representations of my conscious thought" (der Funken des Wunderbaren . . . der neuen Helligkeit . . . jenseits der Vorstellungen meines wachen Denkens, *GW* 3:158). Drawing on the generative force of primordial language that he describes here, Celan's poetry regularly features "light-words" (that is, images of light), ranging from tiny sparks or candle-glow to noonday brilliance, in representing the poet's sometimes successful, often frustrated attempt to recover this obscured language from silence or oblivion. At the time he wrote "Dream of a Dream," and for some years after that, however, he had no inkling that one of Heidegger's most prominent figures of speech was also a light image—the "Lichtung" or forest clearing that lets in the light. The thinker used it repeatedly, usually in a figurative sense, to represent the manner in which the truth of Being comes into unconcealment, but the substance is the same—some form of light or lighted place appears in connection with the poet's or thinker's primordial experience with language or with Being. Again an affinity in the use of light imagery fundamental to both men bespeaks a proximity of thinking that predated Celan's documented knowledge of the thinker's works.

In chapter 7 I will deal with another convergence of views that is evident in "Dream of a Dream": the intricate connection that each perceived independently of the other between thinking or writing poetry and seeing and hearing.

That chapter adds yet another piece of circumstantial evidence to the claim for an early affinity and similarity of thought and language. A further similarity, intriguing but difficult to define precisely, might be adduced from what is sometimes seen as a mystical bent in both men. Clearly each of them knew and had learned from the German mystics, especially Meister Eckhart. Yet even if one disregards this alleged affinity (the exploration of the subconscious in Celan's "Dream of a Dream" might qualify as a modern "mystical" experience), taken together the foregoing examples make it clear that on the basis of the ideas and language of "Dream of a Dream," Celan at this point in his development had far more in common with Heidegger than their external circumstances would indicate. He, of course, did not know this, and apparently Bachmann's hostile attitude toward the thinker contributed to his reluctance to read him at this time. Several years would pass before he could bring himself to engage Heidegger's works. When he did, however, he not only discovered a kindred spirit. He became so intrigued with the thinker's works that he entered into an imaginary conversation with Heidegger—sometimes friendly, sometimes dissenting—that underlay much of his thinking about poetry and entered into a number of his poems. Lacoue-Labarthe's assertion that "Celan's poetry . . . is, in its entirety, a dialogue with Heidegger's thought" oversimplifies the matter, but it calls attention to what for Celan would soon become an ongoing presence in his thinking and writing.[12]

Klaus Demus as a Mediator. Celan's First Reading of Heidegger

Shortly before leaving Vienna for Paris in 1948, Celan had met Klaus Demus, a young Austrian poet. They developed a close friendship that they kept alive through correspondence and frequent personal contact. After spending the 1949–1950 academic year as a student in Paris, where he saw Celan frequently, Demus returned to Paris several times on visits in the early 1950s and always looked up his friend. Knowing Heidegger's works, and considering them important, he remembers trying to interest his friend in that thinker's works but being rebuffed: "Beginning in the fall of 1949 I spoke a good deal with Celan about Heidegger, and also corresponded with him about it. I remember a statement he made in response to my constant urging that he read Heidegger without flinching. He said he was reading Heidegger like a murder mystery, but he couldn't get into his thinking."[13] Celan's ironic answer, probably made in 1952 or 1953, might have been intended to signal misgivings about taking the thinker's writings seriously. The "murder mystery" reference (German "Kriminalroman") also could have been an allusion to what he considered Heidegger's criminal complicity

with the Nazis. But his statement was intentionally misdirectional, for by this time he was already reading the philosopher carefully. It is almost as if he had a guilty conscience for engaging the writings of a former Nazi and did not wish to admit it to Demus or anyone else.

What finally prompted Celan to begin reading Heidegger is still unclear, but he began modestly, and probably reluctantly, with a minor seven-page pamphlet published in 1949 entitled *The Field Path (Der Feldweg)*. A meticulous and voracious reader, the aspiring young poet who now made his meager living by translating poetry and prose into German left behind considerable information on his reading habits. In the case of writers who were especially important to him, he often noted inside the book the date he acquired it, the date he read individual chapters, and the date he finished a complete work. His copy of *The Field Path* contains the handwritten date of "Oct. 12, 1951," making it Celan's first recorded encounter with Heidegger's thought, but the lack of markings by a writer who usually responded with extensive underlines and marginalia to texts that engaged him suggests that it probably made no significant impression on him. This quasi-literary autobiographical reflection in which an unnamed thinker walks through a field and meditates on various aspects of speech, silence, listening, God, humans, and the landscape gave him little sense of the scope or direction of Heidegger's thought. That would not come until the next year, when he began reading *Being and Time,* which he marked extensively.

Primarily through Jean Paul Sartre's mediation, Heidegger's thought in general, and *Being and Time* specifically, had engendered what became the dominant Western intellectual movement of the mid-twentieth century: existentialism. And Paris was its center. It is tempting to think that the presence of Heideggerian thought, which was very much in the air, infected Celan and that he began reading the German philosopher to find out what Parisian intellectual circles were talking about. But with the qualified exception of the dying Franco-German poet Yvan Goll, at this time the unknown young Romanian exile had almost no friends and almost no contact with Parisian literary or intellectual circles, a condition Demus has confirmed.[14] From the fall of 1948 until 1951 he either worked full time or studied literature, not philosophy. Trying to pursue his studies at the Sorbonne and eke out a meager existence with part-time translating jobs all but consumed him. Though he slowly emerged from this isolation, there is nothing to explain why, after resisting Demus's entreaties, he suddenly engaged Heidegger seriously. But early in 1952 he began to be drawn into a major dialogue or, put in other terms, a love-hate relationship with the problematic thinker, and that relationship occupied him until the end of his life.

Approaching Heidegger

Celan Reads Being and Time, *1952–1953*

In 1952 Celan began to engage Heidegger seriously, though it is unclear what prompted him to start. The impulse might have come from his reading a copy of Heidegger's lecture "On the Essence of Reason" ("Vom Wesen des Grundes") before he sent it to Ingeborg Bachmann sometime that year, for a later note proves he knew it, though it is not found in his posthumous library.[1] But evidence for his first major intellectual encounter with Heidegger is clearly documented in the poet's copy of *Being and Time*.

Various reading dates he entered in the text confirm that he began working through parts of it in March 1952 and continued again in February and March 1953.[2] Of the book's 436 pages in his German edition, he entered markings on 118 of them. The absence of any markings in various sections—pages 57–102, 112–139, 168–220, and 290–347—suggests that he was probably reading selectively. These gaps, however, do not signal a lack of serious engagement. Corrections he entered in the text using the publisher's errata slip give only one hint of how exacting he was in his reading generally and in Heidegger specifically.

Christoph Schwerin, who worked closely with Celan in 1955, claims the poet was determined to school himself philosophically in order to explore the proximity of thought and poetry and, if possible, achieve a synthesis between the perfection of poetic language and the rigor of philosophical thinking.[3] In late 2004 a team of scholars in Paris published a comprehensive catalogue of philosophical works found in his posthumous library, along with all the markings and annotations he had entered in them. It revealed that at his death Celan owned works by more than 130 philosophers East and West, and that he had definitely read and marked works by nearly fifty of them. They ranged from Plato and Heraclites through Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Benjamin, Simmel, Dilthey, and Jaspers. In sheer quantity of pages read and the number of

books by a single author that Celan worked through, Heidegger's preeminence among all the thinkers in the poet's library is conspicuous.

The intensity of engagement apparent from the annotations and markings Celan entered in response to his readings in philosophy suggests how strongly, at least at first, he was motivated to grasp the fundamental principles and concepts of this discipline.[4] While reading *Being and Time,* for example, he had entered two lines in the margin of a passage that mentioned the necessity "to inquire into the 'things themselves'" (um den "Sachen selbst" nachzufragen, *G* 2:166), the imperative that Edmund Husserl, Heidegger's mentor and predecessor at the University of Freiburg, had formulated as the basis of his phenomenological studies. Reading it had prompted Celan to enter a marginal note that reads "the things themselves??" (den Sachen selbst??). Later, Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenological thinking would become so appealing that he would attempt to write his own phenomenology of literature (see chapter 10). At this point, however, it appears he was still unfamiliar with this and other concepts and vocabulary in Heidegger's thought.

For Celan, a novice without specialized philosophical training, *Being and Time* was perhaps not the best primer for an introduction to Heidegger. Celan, however, treated it that way. He made no markings in the early sections, where Heidegger begins his examination of the question of Being, which is central to this work. Instead he focused on concepts, vocabulary, and (in a phrase he marked) on Heidegger's "phenomenological method of investigation" (phänomenologische Methode der Untersuchung, *G* 2:27).[5] Thus in the first thirty-eight pages he entered in the margins the terms *ontic/ontology* (*G* 2:15), *existence* (*G* 2:16), *existentiality* (*G* 2:16), *time* and *temporality* (*G* 2:25), *phenomenology* (*G* 2:37, 49), and *hermeneutics* (*G* 2:50) next to passages that defined these terms. He also underlined the relevant sentences in which they occurred. A few marginal notations make it appear that he was challenging Heidegger's claims or was struggling to understand them. In one note he questioned the thinker's verbal gymnastics with the etymology of the German terms *in* and *an* (*G* 2:54). And next to a passage on the philosopher's stated goal to "work out in advance the ontologico-existential structure of discourse on the basis of the analytic of Dasein" (*G* 2:163) he writes the question "how?" suggesting either curiosity or skepticism.

From the array of underlines, marginal slashes, and notations in Celan's own hand it appears his primary goal was to grasp Heidegger's complex thinking and to see if it was compatible with his own. In the process he appears to have discovered views that resonated with or confirmed his views. Many of the passages he marked focused on three topics that were also central concerns of his own po-

etry: the thinker's concern with "truth"; his discussion of death; and explications of how language works. Since Heidegger's magnum opus contained words, concepts, and ideas that corresponded to or adumbrated some of what the poet was already doing or would do later in his own poetry, we will turn first to a few examples of what appealed to Celan in the thinker's ideas on language and his idiosyncratic usage.

Discovering Similar Views on Language

Celan drew two parallel vertical lines in the margin of a passage in which Heidegger qualifies his unconventional language usage. This marginal double-lining marks one of many such passages that underscore the poet's attraction to thinking that seemed to resemble his own. Speaking of the "awkwardness" and "inelegance" of expression in *Being and Time*, Heidegger pleads his case for the difficulty of articulating something that for centuries had remained in the realm of the inarticulate. To tell about entities, he says, is quite different from grasping them in their Being: "For the latter task we lack most of the time not only the words, but above all the 'grammar'" (Für die letztgenannte Aufgabe fehlen nicht nur meist die Worte, sondern vor allem die "Grammatik," *G* 2:52). This statement about a lack of words and a "grammar" with which to work seems to have spoken forcefully to this Holocaust survivor. Celan was faced with the near-impossible task of writing in a mother tongue that he believed had fallen victim to what might be called the "verbicide" caused by the Nazis' abuse and perversion of German. How was it possible to write in a language that, to cite George Steiner, had given hell a native tongue and left parts of the language unusable?[6] He also marked and apparently approved of the subsequent passage on that page about the "outrageous [language] formulations" that early Greek philosophers who wrote about Being imposed on their society. Here, too, Celan may have found justification for his own poetry, which, in the minds of some readers, also bordered on the outrageous as he struggled, in formulations that seemed to subvert conventional German, to articulate what was inexpressible.

It is not surprising that Celan marked a passage where Heidegger coined just such an outrageous formulation: "each case mineness" (Jemeinigkeit, *G* 2:57). Schooled as he was in surrealist poetry, Celan also seems to have resonated with the apparently contradictory claims scattered throughout this work, such as the following one he marked: "That which is ontically closest and well known, is ontologically the farthest and not known at all; and its ontological signification is constantly overlooked" (Das ontisch Nächste und Bekannte ist das ontologisch

Fernste, Unerkannte und in seiner ontologischen Bedeutung ständig Übersehene, *G* 2:59). What appears to be a paradox in Heidegger and his own work, however, is internally consistent with Celan's view of the world, as is evident in similar formations of his own, such as the following lines:

> everything is less than
> it is,
> everything is more
> [alles ist weniger als
> es ist,
> alles ist mehr] (*GW* 2:76)

For both, only through paradoxes could a thinker or poet illuminate a full range of possibilities in thought or language.

From his extensive markings and marginalia, it seems that Celan's desire to grasp Heidegger's views on how language works caused him to focus especially on chapter 5, section 34, entitled "Being There and Discourse: Language." In the passages (*G* 2:34) where Heidegger defined *discourse* (Rede), *meaning* (Sinn), and *language* (Sprache), Celan wrote each of these respective words in the margins. And in a passage where Heidegger explicated the relationship between linguistic utterance/discourse and acoustic perception/hearing and claimed that "hearkening" is more primordial than what is defined by psychology as "hearing," Celan responded by marking sentences asserting that what we first hear are never noises or complexes of sounds but the specific creaking wagon, the motorcycle, and so forth. In response to this assertion the poet entered the term *phenomenology* in the margin (*G* 2:217). This exposition of what is heard "naturally" (natürlich, *G* 2:218) may have echoed Celan's own awareness of the phenomenon of the semi- or unarticulated voices of his dead that inhabited his poetic world. Thus he marked a subsequent passage, saying that even when we hear "how" something is said, we may not understand the "what" (Heidegger gives the example of speech that is indistinct or in a foreign language). What we first hear are *unintelligible* words but words nevertheless and not just tone-data (*G* 2:218). In Celan's specific world these were unintelligible or muted words emanating from the Holocaust dead, words that he was trying to recover from speechlessness and forgetfulness.[7]

Celan's connection between the pre- or semiverbal and its verbal articulation set the stage for the next sentence. He reacted to a turgid statement by Heidegger with the telling marginal notation "important for poetry" (wichtig für die Dichtung). What probably resonated with him was not Heidegger's style but the claim

that for the conjunction of adequate discourse with appropriate diction to occur, there must be "co-understanding beforehand"; that is, the listener or poet must be specially attuned to what he or she hears before it can be brought to language by the poet or understood by the listener:

> Admittedly, when the discourse is about what is heard "naturally," we can at the same time hear the "diction," the way in which it is said, but only if there is some co-understanding beforehand of what is said-in-the-talk; for only so is there a possibility of gauging whether the way in which it is said is appropriate to what the discourse is about thematically.
>
> [Im "natürlichen" Hören des Worüber der Rede können wir allerdings zugleich die Weise des Gesagten, die "Diktion" hören, aber auch das nur in einem vorgängigen Mitverstehen des Geredeten; denn nur so besteht die Möglichkeit, das Wie des Gesagtseins abzuschätzen in seiner Angemessenheit an das thematische Worüber der Rede] (*G* 2:218)

The operative words here are "co-understanding beforehand." Though unspoken, the co-understanding Celan envisioned required knowledge of what shaped his diction, including the entire expanse of European literature he had read or translated; his Judaism; Christian and Jewish mysticism; obscure or archaic usages of the German language; technical terms drawn from a variety of disciplines such as geology, meteorology, mining, music, and physiology; and a daunting array of political, historical, and literary allusions and citations.[8] In terms of his mode of expression, this co-understanding was based on the assumption that his readers were already attuned to it, that is, to the "what-is-said-in-the-talk," or that they could acquire this sensibility by repeated reading. As he read further in Heidegger, he would work out this concept in more detail, but his statement at this point that it was "important for poetry" suggests that even without elaboration he subscribed to Heidegger's formulations here about this kind of "hearing naturally" as fundamental for himself as a poet and for those who wished to understand his poetry.

On the same page he marked in the margin and underlined another passage that seems to have resonated with him: "*Keeping silent* is another essential possibility of discourse, and it has the same existential foundation" (Dasselbe existenziale Fundament hat eine andere wesenhafte Möglichkeit des Redens, *das Schweigen*, *G* 2:218). After the events of the Holocaust Celan's poetry became obsessed with silence, keeping silent, and the other implicit and explicit meanings of the term *Schweigen*. Later he wrote in French to his wife about being surrounded by "silent words" (paroles de silence).[9] One could say that he situated much of

his poetry in the realm of silence or, by its very nature, found it situated there. In Heidegger he gained support for his belief that this preoccupation with *Schweigen* was not an idiosyncrasy on his part but a fundamental aspect of poetic discourse.

Following Heidegger's assertion on the next page that authentic *Schweigen* is possible only in genuine discourse, he also took note of the thinker's use of *Verschwiegenheit,* which derives from *Schweigen* and is usually rendered as "secrecy, discretion, reticence, reserve," all terms that suggest the concealing of speech by not using it, whether that silencing occurs voluntarily or involuntarily. Again Celan approvingly marked a passage containing this term that for him valorized silence, that is, the unspoken in language, as a fundamental component of poetic discourse: "As a mode of discoursing, *Verschwiegenheit* articulates the intelligibility of Dasein in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing which is genuine, and to a being-with-one-another which is transparent" (Verschwiegenheit artikuliert als Modus des Redens die Verständlichkeit des Daseins so ursprünglich, daß ihr das echte Hörenkönnen und durch-sichtige Miteinandersein entstammt, *G* 2:219).

In his claim that the ability to hear authentically and to live among others "transparently" (perhaps without dissimulation?) derives from the unsaid or unspoken in discourse, Heidegger legitimated for Celan a view the poet already held. Celan often lived, as he once put it, "in the company of words" (en compagnie de mots).[10] In this surrounding he was searching for, or seeking to recover, genuine, uncontaminated language. He recognized in Heidegger one who was on a similar quest for the primordial in language, an affinity reflected in the word *ursprünglich* (primordial) that the thinker had used in the foregoing citation and in other passages of *Being and Time* that Celan marked.[11] For the poet there was also an additional dimension. At least since he wrote his poem "Deathfugue" in 1945,[12] he had struggled to recover from silence the unspeakableness of the Holocaust, which might be seen as his own version of Heidegger's speechlessness of Being.

In these elaborations on language theory that triggered so many underlines, slashes, and marginal comments by Celan, Heidegger further argued that a return to primordial discourse required a rejection of the traditional philosophy or discipline of language called linguistics (Sprachwissenschaft), since it was grounded on flawed or restrictive views. Celan made two- or three-line marginal slashes next to this passage and also underlined parts of two sentences stating that we must revolutionize our thinking about language by returning to its ontological primordial foundations:

> The basic stock of "categories of signification" that was carried over into subsequent linguistics and that in principle is still accepted as the standard today, is oriented toward discourse as assertion. But if on the contrary we take this phenomenon to have in principle the primordiality and breadth of an *existentiale,* then there emerges the necessity of reestablishing linguistics on foundations that are ontologically more primordial.
>
> [Der in die nachkommende Sprachwissenschaft übergangene und grundsätzlich heute noch maßgebende Grundbestand der "Bedeutungskategorien" ist an der Rede als Aussage orientiert. Nimmt man dagegen dieses Phänomen in der grundsätzlichen Ursprünglichkeit und Weite eines Existenzials, dann ergibt sich die Notwendigkeit einer Umlegung der Sprachwissenschaft auf ontologisch ursprünglichere Fundamente] (*G* 2:220)

From his markings it is clear that Celan followed the subsequent argument closely and apparently approvingly. The text states that to continue in the old way fails to answer the question, "What kind of Being characterizes language in general?" When he marked a sentence that underscored this inadequacy, he was again in apparent agreement with Heidegger: "Is it an accident that proximally and for the most part significations are 'worldly,' sketched out beforehand by the significance of the world, that indeed they are often predominantly 'spatial'?" (Ist es Zufall, daß die Bedeutungen zunächst und zumeist "weltliche" sind, durch die Bedeutsamkeit der Welt vorgezeichnete, ja sogar oft vorwiegend "räumliche"? *G* 2:221). Shortly thereafter at the end of section 34 (*G* 2:222), his marginal markings break off and do not resume again until page 292. One might think that section 35, "Idle Talk" ("Das Gerede"), and section 37, "Ambiguity" ("Die Zweideutigkeit"), would have appealed to him, but he made no markings in these sections. Nevertheless, he was not through learning from *Being and Time* about how language is used. Two final examples that he marked illustrate this search for verbal strategies compatible with his own developing sensibility.

The first relates to Heidegger's style. The poet could not have ignored how the philosopher used the hyphen to create sometimes innovative, sometimes clumsy monster-put-together words or phrases, a verbal strategy that pervades *Being and Time.* In some of these coinages, for example when the thinker used terms such as one's "being-no-longer-in-the-world" (das Nicht-mehr-in-der-Welt-sein, *G* 2:317), "the going-out-of-the-world" (das Aus-der-Welt-gehen, *G* 2:320), or "this not-yet" (dieses Noch-nicht, *G* 2:322), he was making a basic poetic move by using a hyphen or hyphens to turn what had been literal into figurative language and abstract concepts that had not existed before the creation of this new com-

pound form. Early in his career Celan had begun combining words this way. In 1948, for example, he had experimented with the hyphen to create figurative images, for example "Also-Tree" (Auch-Baum) or "Almost-tree" (Beinah-Baum, *GW* 3:155). And in his "Meridian" speech of 1960, and probably in conscious response to or imitation of Heidegger, he did essentially the same thing by using the hyphen to transform terms like "the now-no-longer" (das Schon-nicht-mehr, *GW* 3:197) and "the still-now" (das Immer-noch, *GW* 3:197) into the realm of figurative language. Celan did not learn this device from Heidegger, but in him he found validation of one of his own literary and stylistic propensities.

Another example of original word combinations occurred in Heidegger's discussion of the phenomenon of "seeming" (scheinen). Celan marked a passage that explicated the use of this German term: "Self-showing is what we call *seeming*" (Sichzeigen nennen wir *Scheinen, G* 2:39). After Heidegger had extended this notion of self-showing to discourse, Celan marked another passage: "When fully concrete, discoursing (letting something be seen) has the character of speaking—vocal proclamation in words" (Im konkreten Vollzug hat das Reden [Sehenlassen] den Charakter des Sprechens, der stimmlichen Verlautbarung in Worten, *G* 2:44). By conflating the optical, that is, that which is seen through discourse, with speech, Heidegger made another figurative move that resembles what poets do when using the rhetorical device called synesthesia, in which one hears colors, sees speech, and so forth. In his earliest poems Celan had also used the image of eyes a number of times. Soon after reading Heidegger, Celan took this notion a step farther in his poetry by relating human communication normally found in spoken language to the image of communicating through the eye (see "Tenebrae," "Flower," "White and Light," "Speech-Grille"). In Heidegger he had found the confirmation for a literary concept that he was in the process of developing.

Learning about "Truth" from Heidegger

Judging by markings in the text, what Celan found in Heidegger when reading about the concept of "truth" also caught his attention. Despite the near disappearance of this term as a meaningful concept in most modern and postmodern poetry, he used it throughout his own poems, especially in the later ones. His readings in *Being and Time* point to similarities of usage that might have originated with Heidegger.

Early in the text he drew a half-bracket in the margin and two lines next to the passage that first introduced the word *truth:* "Every disclosure of Being as

the *transcendens* is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of Being) is *veritas transcendentalis*" (Jede Erschließung von Sein als des *transcendens* ist transzendentale Erkenntnis. Phänomenologische Wahrheit [Erschlossenheit von Sein]: ist *veritas transcendentalis, G* 2:51). At this point Heidegger did not elaborate on the concept, but when he did, Celan immediately seized on it. In a later marked passage he took note of how "Truth (uncoveredness) is something that must always first be wrested from entities" (Die Wahrheit [Entdecktheit] muß dem Seienden immer erst abgerungen werden, *G* 2:294). Earlier in his text Heidegger, who here defined *truth* as "uncoveredness," had cited the word *aletheia* as the one the Greeks used to express truth, but he did not yet elaborate on its revealing/concealing nature as extensively as he would in later writings. Nevertheless, this notion of truth as "uncoveredness" seems to have resonated with Celan, just as did another statement in this paragraph, where he made two marginal slashes at the point where Heidegger uses the concept of "untruth." Heidegger's sentence reads, "When Dasein so expresses itself, does not a primordial understanding of its own being thus make itself known—the understanding, even if it is only pre-ontological, that being-in-untruth makes up an essential characteristic of being-in-the-world?" (Kündigt sich in solchem Sichausprechen des Daseins nicht ein ursprüngliches Seinsverständnis seiner selbst an, das wenngleich nur vorontologische Verstehen dessen, daß In-der-Unwahrheit-sein eine wesenhafte Bestimmung des In-der-Welt-seins ausmacht? *G* 2:294).

The notion that "Being-in-untruth" is an essential characteristic of "Being-in-the-world" must have struck a chord with this Holocaust survivor, whose view of truth had been determined largely by that experience and by events in postwar Germany. Beginning in 1952 and for the rest of his life, in letters to his wife Celan repeatedly used the words *truth* and *true*.[13] From their context there it is clear that he did not use the term to mean a transcendental or higher value. For him it meant openness, candor, sincerity, genuineness or, in negative terms, the opposite of deceitfulness, falsehood, insincerity, dishonesty, meretriciousness, shallowness. In confirmation of Heidegger's observation, it was precisely these "untrue" characteristics that he found in postwar German society.

Plagued by the memory of what the Third Reich had done to his family, his people, and his language, he believed that in spite of the information available about culpability for its actions between 1933 and 1945, Germany had never come to grips with or made a clean breast of its past. The fact that most important positions in government, industry, the media, universities, and cultural institutions were occupied by former Nazis was evidence enough for Celan that untruth was

ubiquitous and that what remained unspoken about the Nazi past far outweighed what had been acknowledged. Based on his conversations with Holocaust survivors, he also believed that much of what had been written about the death camps failed to capture the incommensurability of the horror. He had read widely on the topic, spoken with Holocaust survivors, and discussed the death camps with sympathetic listeners.[14] As a result, he suspected most Germans of still being crypto-fascists.

The *truth* Celan sought, a word that for him characterized the essence of poetic revelation, also meant recognition and a forthright accounting by contemporary Germans of the Nazi past with which they had not come to grips. Besides recognition, it included admission of culpability and a genuine effort to atone for what the Third Reich had done to the world. His interest in Heidegger's statement about the "certainty" truth brings suggests that absent such acknowledgment, accounting, and atoning, he had reason to remain skeptical of and suspicious toward almost all Germans. Repeatedly he inquired of friends if those Germans who reviewed his works—his publishers, publishers' readers, or anyone else who had serious dealings with him (or even appeared in the same anthology with his work)—had a Nazi past and, if they did, whether or how they had accounted for it. It is safe to assume that this very question about Heidegger was on his mind as he read about "truth" in *Being and Time* and that it continued to preoccupy him until he met the thinker personally and asked him about it in 1967. Thus the "truth" that Celan sought so obsessively in his poetry was not abstract or metaphysical in the traditional sense, though any attempt to generalize about Germany's culpability cannot avoid some abstraction. For him, "truth" had to be established in temporality and with reference to specific times, places, events, and persons. Heidegger was one of those persons about and from whom he hoped to learn the "truth."

Heidegger on Death, and Celan's Dead

While reading *Being and Time,* the poet came across another topic that had preoccupied him since his early years—death. It is evident that in dealing with this topic, his responses were conditioned by his Jewishness and by recent German history.

Beginning in section 48, Celan carefully followed Heidegger's text as he attempted to understand how one "gain[s] an existential conception of death" (Die Gewinnung eines existenzialen Begriffes vom Tode, *G* 2:316), a phrase the poet underlined. In the next paragraph he underlined the assertion that "Dasein is es-

sentially being with Others" (Dasein [ist] wesenhaft Mitsein mit Anderen, *G* 2:316). His poem "Deathfugue," which speaks in the first-person plural, clearly identifies the poetic voice as belonging to the dead, and a number of other poems, all of which, he asserted, were dialogic in nature, can be viewed as conversations with his dead.[15] This phenomenon of speaking with or hearing the voices of the dead was not uncommon among Holocaust survivors, and it is pronounced in his poems. On the previous page (*G* 2:315) he had underscored a formulation by Heidegger on death as this "being-with-Others" that echoed his own views. Obviously engrossed by Heidegger's elucidations, he then read the claim that "death is a changeover of an entity from Dasein (or life) to no-longer Dasein" (Umschlag eines Seienden aus der Seinsart des Daseins [bzw. des Lebens] zum Nichtmehrdasein, *G* 2:317). He also underlined Heidegger's assertion, "The something [that is] still-only-present-at-hand is 'more' than a lifeless material thing. In it there is an encounter with something unalive that has lost its life" (Das Nur-noch-Vorhandene ist "mehr" als ein *lebloses* materielles Ding. Mit ihm begegnet ein des Lebens verlustig gegangenes Unlebendiges, *G* 2:317). Within his own frame of reference the poet easily could have taken this formulation as descriptive of the absent presence of the dead whom he tried to "bring to language." As George Steiner has written of Celan's poetry, "The living and the dead, the tongues of past poets and present sayers, are in constant exchange . . . Celan is in dialogue . . . with himself and his surroundings, both as a poet and human, private person.[16]

And in the verb *encounter* (begegnet) in the passage by Heidegger above, he likewise would have found justification for his view of poetry as a dialogue or encounter between two entities, be they living or dead. Even if he did not appropriate it from this specific passage, the echoes of this signature Heideggerian term *encounter*, which Celan's later "Meridian" speech notes as a hallmark of all poetry, suggest an affinity of thought that became more obvious as he got deeper into the thinker's works.

On the following page Heidegger states, "The dying of Others is not something which we experience in a genuine sense; at best we are always just 'there alongside'" (Wir erfahren nicht im genuinen Sinne das Sterben der Anderen, sondern sind höchstens immer nur "dabei," *G* 2:318). This viewpoint became an article of faith among existentialists. As we might expect, Celan marked it, though perhaps for different reasons. It must have had special meaning for someone wracked by survivor guilt, since it probably increased his awareness of how remote he was from those for whom he wished to speak and how inadequate he felt about his efforts to be their voice.

A statement on the following page, which he also marked, must have resonated with him because of memories of his lost family members: "No one can take the Other's dying away from him" (Keiner kann dem Anderen sein Sterben abnehmen, *G* 2:319). In tracking Heidegger's attempt to find an ontologically adequate way of defining *end* and *totality* (*G* 2:321), Celan took special note of the assertion that in Dasein there is a "not yet" *(Noch-nicht),* a lack of totality as long as Dasein is. Did this statement trigger thoughts of his dead mother, whom he addressed or thematized in several poems? Or of friends and relatives who vanished in the Holocaust? Several other markings reinforce the claim that Celan was reading with his Jewish dead in mind. He especially highlighted passages that acknowledged that death is an integral part of life but not an ultimate end. One example can stand here for several: "The ending which we have in view when we speak of death does not signify Dasein's Being-at-an-end, but a *Being-at-the-end* of this entity" (Das mit dem Tod gemeinte Enden bedeutet kein Zu-Ende-sein des Daseins, sondern ein *Sein zum Ende* dieses Seienden, *G* 2:326). In markings that approve of Heidegger's assertion that his form of investigation takes precedence over attempted answers to the question of death by means of biology, psychology, theodicy, or theology (*G* 2:330), he demonstrated that here, too, Heidegger was "speaking his language" on this fundamental matter.

A Mentor Becomes a Magnet

Other topics or subtopics in *Being and Time* also engaged Celan's attention. Several passages show his interest in the role of the "they" (das Man), the anonymous social force that, according to Heidegger, is the "Self of Everydayness" (das Selbst der Alltäglichkeit, *G* 2:335). Seen through the poet's lens, this social force was what kept the truth about Germany's past, that is, public acknowledgment of and expiation for German war guilt, from emerging in that country. Another passage he marked suggests that he was drawn to Heidegger's portrayal of human existence as one of utter isolation, a reflection of his own feelings during his early years in Paris: "The caller is Dasein in its uncanniness: primordial, thrown Being-in-the-world as the 'not-at-home'—the bare 'that-it-is' in the 'nothing' of the world" (Er [der Rufer] ist das Dasein in seiner Unheimlichkeit, das ursprüngliche geworfene In-der-Welt-sein als Un-zuhause, das nackte "Dass" im Nichts der Welt, *G* 2:367). Celan had begun to read *Being and Time* with the idea of schooling himself in twentieth-century thinking generally and Heidegger's thought specifically. But this encounter turned into more than that. Apparently something about this opus turned into a magnet that drew him to

further readings and triggered vibrations that would see him poetically transform and transport certain ideas he encountered in the thinker's works into his own world. In short, Celan found Heidegger to be more compatible than he could have imagined and, in some ways, spiritually related to the poet himself. It would be many years before the thinker would relax this hold on him.

"Connecting" with Heidegger, 1952–1954

For Celan perhaps the most significant personal event of 1952, if not of his entire life, was his marriage to Gisèle Lestrange, a young graphic artist from a French aristocratic family. Besides her extraordinary devotion to him, which provided desperately needed stability when his fragile mental tapestry later unraveled, she gave birth to a son who died the day after he was born in 1953 and to another son, Eric, in 1955.

As a writer Celan also began to gain recognition when he read his poetry in May 1952 before the influential literary forum known as the "Group 47" (Gruppe 47) in Niendorf, Germany, a village on the Baltic Sea. In December of the same year his first volume of poetry to reach the public *(Poppy and Memory)* appeared in West Germany, and soon he received invitations to read his poems at various locations throughout that country. These readings, and especially the dissemination of his poem "Deathfugue" ("Todesfuge"), which drew widespread critical attention as a Holocaust poem, caused the West German literary establishment to pay increasing attention to him.

Biographers, however, generally fail to note the powerful impact Heidegger had on Celan's development during these years. Celan not only began to "connect" with the thinker—probably at no other time in his life did he engage him more intensely and extensively. Some years later he told Otto Pöggeler that in these years "Heidegger was my vis-à-vis" (Heidegger war mein Gegenüber).[1] As he entered into a genuine, intense intellectual encounter with the thinker's readings from 1952 to 1954, he discovered affinities and convergent views that gradually displaced his earlier reluctance with enthusiastic engagement.

Making the Connection through *Wrong Paths*

Either during or soon after working through *Being and Time,* Celan read a 1931 edition of Heidegger's fifty-one-page pamphlet *What Is Metaphysics.* On August 18, 1952, he noted having purchased several small philosophical treatises by Heidegger and Jaspers, among them this one, and probably also Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism.*[2] A date in the text records that he finished reading *What Is Metaphysics* on August 20, 1952.

Like *Being and Time,* this brief work, an expanded version of Heidegger's inaugural lecture given at the University of Freiburg on July 24, 1929, represented the philosopher's earlier thought. But its disquisition on the differences between traditional metaphysics and Heidegger's preoccupation in this treatise with Being, a topic that the thinker claimed had been neglected by philosophers since the Greeks, seems to have appealed to the poet less than *Being and Time* did. Judging by the paucity of markings, the only concepts that might have reverberated in Celan's thinking were those dealing with Nothingness, as well as some brief remarks on the final two pages about the concern shared by thinkers and poets with the proper use of language. But even in this regard, Heidegger added that "we know nothing about the dialogue between poets and thinkers, who 'live in proximity on the most separated mountains'" (Wir wissen aber nichts von der Zwiesprache der Dichter und Denker, die "nahe wohnen auf getrenntesten Bergen," *G* 9:312). Over the next two decades that view would shift as Heidegger moved the two mountains where poets and thinkers dwelled into closer proximity.

When Celan read the copy of *Wrong Paths* that Bachmann had given him in 1950 (he records reading dates of July 4 and August 8, 1953), it was a different story. Now he found himself in the world of Heidegger's later thought (*Wrong Paths* first appeared in 1950). In it he found Heidegger stating that true poets and thinkers are engaged in a similar project, that is, of expressing Being, and that their concern with many aspects of language was similar. This work specifically, and Heidegger's later work generally, ignited the poet. It marked Celan's shift from a reluctant or skeptical learner to an enthusiastic reader, though that unreserved enthusiasm would wane again within a few years.

Few works by Heidegger or any other author in Celan's posthumous library are as well worn or contain quite as many annotations and markings as this one does, and few absorbed him so intensely. Besides underlines and single, double, and triple vertical lines in the margins next to specific passages, he decorated the borders generously and energetically with *x*'s, swirls, exclamation points, ques-

tion marks, lone words or phrases as textual annotations, and the single lowercase letter *i*, which the editor of the historical-critical edition of his poems thinks was an abbreviation for an "idea" that Celan hoped to develop in his poetry.[3] It is unclear whether the numerous question marks signaled disagreement with or difficulty in grasping Heidegger, but together with other markings, they suggest not only that Celan engaged the text with unusual energy and attentiveness but that he did so on several levels, often simultaneously.

From these markings one can adduce that his reading aims in these years were (1) to grasp Heidegger's overall thinking, as well as major themes and topics in his thought; (2) to understand, learn from, and possibly imitate or borrow his language, both in its idiosyncratic and more conventional usage; (3) to gain validation of his own role as a poet; (4) to discover congenial explanations for the origins of poetic language; and (5) to find source material to use in his own poetry. While the poet was reading *Wrong Paths* and other works in the next two years, each mode of reacting to the text came into play.

Entries on a blank page following the title page illustrate Celan's attention to several themes he found in *Wrong Paths*.[4] There he created a handwritten index of seven topics that especially interested him, followed by page numbers for each: "beauty" (Schönheit), 25, 40, 43; "destitute time" (dürftige Zeit), 302; "language" (Sprache), 310; "the seer" (Der Seher), 347; "poets" (Dichter), 272; "saying, song" (Sagen, Gesang), 317–318; and "thinking" (Denken), 372. The nature of the topics suggests that like Heidegger, he was striving to understand the elements that connected higher thinking and poetry, but he approached Heidegger's disquisitions on the matter from the perspective of a practicing poet, not a trained philosopher.

Learning German from Heidegger

Celan's notations suggest that Heidegger's language attracted him for two reasons. The first was the thinker's innovative, imaginative, idiosyncratic usage. When reading the second essay in *Wrong Paths*, entitled "The Temporality of the World Image" ("Die Zeit des Weltbildes"), the poet made more markings than in any other work by Heidegger. But the markings were peculiar to this chapter, and he made them on twenty-four of thirty-five pages. These are not the annotations, question marks, *x*'s, *i*'s, or other responses found elsewhere in the text that suggest engagement with the content. Instead, except for one passage in the thirty-five pages of printed text, where he made two lines in the margin, only two types of markings appear: underlines beneath vast numbers of words,

phrases, and complete sentences; and large circular swirls in the margin, sometimes as many as seven on a page (see gallery). Such swirls rarely appear elsewhere in his readings. Each corresponds to an underlined word, phrase, or sentence. Since this type of marking is absent in previous or subsequent readings, it seems as though in this essay Celan, without regard for the content, was focusing almost completely on Heidegger's language.

One explanation for this practice might be that Celan hoped to develop his own innovative and original style and diction and that he found Heidegger's somewhat obscure way of writing worthy of imitation or at least usable as a source from which he could learn. From the outset critics had faulted his own poetry for being obscure or hermetic, a criticism he answered in his "Meridian" speech of 1960 when he cited Pascal's statement that poetry was congenitally obscure.[5] Given this position, it was only a small step to Heidegger's innovative language, whose obscurity might be said to reflect the difficulty of using conventional language to think and write about language and the nature of authentic poetic discourse.

Another, more basic, reason for engaging Heidegger's language this way might have had to do with Celan's own command of German, which, at least during the first years in Paris, he did not consider adequate. From this perspective it could be said that he engaged this vis-à-vis as a highly sophisticated, congenial mentor or model for writing in German.

Celan was raised in a multilingual environment. At home in Czernowitz he spoke German, which was literally his mother's tongue as well as the cultural language of this far corner of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that had become a part of Romania in 1919, the year before Celan's birth. Showing early signs of an extraordinary gift for languages, he spoke Romanian and German at school and with friends, picked up Yiddish in the streets, and learned French very well in school, along with English, Greek, and Latin. Shortly before turning eighteen in 1938, he left his home for Tours, France, to study medicine. There he was enrolled for two semesters and spoke little else but French. Returning home in 1939, he again heard and spoke German daily, but by mid-1940, when Soviet troops occupied the city, he immersed himself in Russian, briefly became an interpreter for the occupying Soviets, and began studies at the university, where the language of instruction was Russian. During his eighteen months in a Nazi forced labor camp from 1942 to 1944 he probably spoke some German and continued to write poems in German, but in all likelihood he spoke more Romanian while there. In the year following his return to Czernowitz in 1944, he also spoke German less frequently, since Russian was now the official language of this

region, which only recently had been incorporated into the Soviet Union. From 1945 to 1947 he spoke Romanian while living in Bucharest. The seven months in Vienna between December 1947 and July 1948 represented his only immersion in a German-language environment since the early 1940s, and there would be none for a number of years after. Following his departure for Paris in 1948, French became his language of daily discourse.

Though he was steeped in literary German and, since his teens, had been writing poetry in what he considered to be his mother tongue, he felt acute isolation by being cut off from contemporary spoken and written German. As letters to his wife from the early 1950s reveal, his years in Parisian exile reinforced the deep insecurity he felt in his command of contemporary German. Numerous orthographic errors in letters and manuscripts as late as 1960 reflect the weakness of his background in this area, though in fact his grammatical and syntactical command of German was solid.[6] Further, his readings in German literature had given him an astonishing vocabulary, and he made conscious efforts to expand it by reading both general and specialized dictionaries. But his confidence in his control of the language lagged far behind his actual ability. A letter from Germany to his wife on September 28, 1955, confirms that these early fears were ill founded. It reports on his newly gained insight that since his poetry had nothing to do with the language spoken in contemporary Germany, "my fears in this regard, nourished by my difficulties as a translator, are groundless" (mes angoisses à ce propos, alimentées par mes ennuis de traducteur, sont sans objet).[7] Much of what he had learned at home was old-fashioned, somewhat unconventional, German that was out of step with current usage, and in the early 1950s he was uncomfortably aware of it. Christoph Schwerin, a native German who met him in Paris in 1955 and worked for a time as his secretary, reports that even at that point the poet's colloquial German represented a somewhat archaic variation of standard German that he retained from his youth in Czernowitz and that included speech mannerisms and phrases common in the eighteenth century but no longer in use.[8] And Ilana Shmueli, who grew up with Celan, notes that "the German of Czernowitz had a bad reputation because of its twisted linguistic structures, its odd vocabulary, and curious turns of speech."[9] Celan eagerly tried to compensate for this perceived deficiency by reading German newspapers, magazines, and books, by seeking out German-speaking friends (for example, Klaus and Nani Demus, Hanne and Hermann Lenz, and Ingeborg Bachmann), and by traveling to Germany frequently in order to immerse himself briefly in and keep in touch with the living language. But he needed more, and he seems to have found it in Heidegger.

While reading *Wrong Paths* the poet began to keep a notebook on his readings of Heidegger, a practice he continued the next year when he worked through *Introduction to Metaphysics* and *What Is Called Thinking*. But in contrast to these later readings, where he reflected on and responded to various statements by Heidegger, his notebook entries for *Wrong Paths* cease after the first essay. And instead of responding to Heidegger's thinking with original reflections and reactions, as he would in his notebook for *Introduction to Metaphysics* and *What Is Called Thinking*, his entries in this one are limited to reproducing vocabulary items—more than two dozen of them.[10] After registering these vocabulary items from the first essay, he stops using his notebook this way and transfers what appears to be a preoccupation with specific words to the printed pages of his version of *Wrong Paths*.

Given Heidegger's highly idiosyncratic vocabulary, this would be easy to understand if Celan had focused on examples of the thinker's unique language usage. But this was not the case. The notebook entries from the first essay; the exuberant markings of words and phrases in the second essay, "The Temporality of Language," described above; and the hundreds of less-energetic but pronounced underlinings of words and phrases in all the subsequent essays in *Wrong Paths* share one trait—an educated native speaker would consider all of them to be common vocabulary items in standard German. Apparently for Celan they were not. Relatively prosaic, they were not the kind of words he would have encountered frequently in the literary German. They include such terms and phrases as "to give a new interpretation" (umdeuten, 76), "to make clear" (verdeutlicht, 77), "future" (künftig, 78), "devised" (erdacht, 81), "to aim/drive at something" (zielt darauf ab, 82), "unconditional" (vorbehaltlos, 86), "available" (verfügbar, 86), "to be aware of something" (über etwas im Bilde sein, 89), "legitimate" (rechtmäßig, 94), "arrogance" (Überheblichkeit, 96), and "abolishment" (Abschaffung, 99). Though he also underscored or marked coinages or examples of unusual diction throughout the work—especially Heidegger's imaginative etymologies, for example the term "to protect" (schützen, 280) or the common origin of "create" (schaffen) and "to draw or scoop up" (schöpfen, 298)—his markings of numerous individual words throughout the text give the overriding impression that on one level this chapter of *Wrong Paths* served him as a means of vocabulary building. Doubtless at least one motivation for doing this was the poet's desire to improve his command of the language. Since his only source of income was translating French texts for German publishers, he knew that editors in Germany would scrutinize his translations, and he wanted his language to measure up.

Heidegger Reinforces Celan in His Role as a Poet

On another level, in *Wrong Paths* Celan found ample validation for his calling as a poet. Writing poetry while struggling financially as a translator had left him feeling unrecognized and unappreciated, and his isolation in Paris did nothing to reinforce his sense of self-worth as a poet. Various passages he read and marked confirmed his own views on the importance of his writing. In one account of poetry, which Heidegger variously called by the general term *Dichtung* in the broader Greek meaning of "poetry," that is, imaginative creation of the highest order, or the more specific *Poesie,* meaning lyric poetry, Celan entered a line down the entire margin of page 60, where, among other things, the author advocated the primacy of "Dichtung" among the art forms. According to Heidegger architecture, sculpture, painting, and music all were essentially "poetry" in this sense.

Judging by his markings, the essay "What Are Poets For?" seems to have spoken to Celan with unusual force in its elaboration of the role of the poet. According to a sentence he underlined, that role was "to attend, singing, to the trace of the fugitive gods"[11] (singend auf die Spur der entflohenen Götter achten, 272). He highlighted numerous other passages in this essay. One explained the poet's activity as a special speaker with an almost sacred calling who had insights denied normal mortals (317–320). Another longer exposition posited the poet's role as seer, a concept he obviously found sympathetic and underlined accordingly (347–353). Poets, Heidegger claimed, are repositories of all that is seen or has been seen, which means this "seer" is also one who possesses special knowledge. Since "knowledge is the memory of Being," then, "*Mnemosyne* is the mother of the muses" (Das Wissen ist das Gedächtnis des Seins. Darum ist *Mnemosyne* die Mutter der Musen, 348–349), another concept that would have resonated with this poet obsessed with remembering and memorializing victims of the Holocaust. Seeing the results of that catastrophe more clearly than others, he believed, endowed him with a special calling to articulate it.

In seeking corroboration for his own poetic calling, Celan also made a strong marginal slash next to a sentence that obviously spoke to him, underlined it, and entered an *i* next to it. It reads, "Therefore 'poets in a destitute time' must themselves create the essence of poetry" (Darum müssen "Dichter in dürftiger Zeit" das Wesen der Dichtung eigens dichten, 272). This statement could hardly have been a more apt description of a poet who considered himself "perhaps one of the last ones who has to live out the fate of Jewish spirituality [intellectuality]

in Europe" (Vielleicht bin ich einer der Letzten, die das Schicksal jüdischer Geistigkeit in Europa zuendeleben müssen).[12] But like Heidegger, he realized that trying to "express Being," whether as a thinker or as a poet, was a risky undertaking. He therefore marked an entire paragraph in which his vis-à-vis asserted that Hölderlin's poetry was a risk. Among other things, it noted that "the breath by which the more venturesome are more daring . . . means directly the word and the nature of language. Those who are more daring by a breath dare the venture with language" (Der Hauch, um den die Wagenderen wagender sind . . . bedeutet unmittelbar das Wort und das Wesen der Sprache, 317–318).

Celan also made two marginal lines next to another passage on this theme that, with slight emendation, could apply to his own writing. Speaking of finding a single word to express the essence of Being, Heidegger claims, "Therein can be measured how daring each thinking word is that is addressed to Being" (Daran läßt sich ermessen, wie gewagt jedes denkende Wort ist, das dem Sein zugesprochen wird, 366). For Celan, every poem and every translation was a risk taken in the hope of receiving or recovering language from the realm of silence that Heidegger had characterized in *Being and Time* as "das Schweigen" or "Die Verschwiegenheit."

Learning More from Heidegger about Translation, Inspiration, Poetry

The thinker also corroborated Celan's thinking about how translations are produced. With the exception of some early, distasteful work he did only for money, Celan considered his translations equal to his own poems, and he viewed his creations as a translator to be no different from his original poetry.[13] Judging by markings in the last essay in *Wrong Paths*, entitled "The Dictum of Aximander," he found corroboration there for this thinking. In that essay Heidegger translates a word by Aximander from the Greek and speaks of "risking a translation that sounds alien and initially open to misinterpretation" (eine Übersetzung, die befremdlich klingt und vorerst missdeutbar bleibt, 366–367). He goes on to say that like his own attempt, "all translation in the field of thinking makes an unreasonable demand" on the translator (alles Übersetzen im Felde des Denkens [ist] ein solches Zumuten, 367). Venturing to translate the Greek word, he goes on to say that this particular translation was "dictated to [his] thinking" (dem Denken diktiert, 369), suggesting that this is what happens with authentic translation. At this point Celan wrote in the margin one of the German words for "Inspiration!" (Eingebung), apparently an approval of the claim that trans-

lation was not an attempt to imitate slavishly or render the original literally but an inspired new creation that came from a source other than his own cognitive faculties. This was consonant with his own emerging theory of translation, and Heidegger again provided support for it. Celan also made a line in the margin next to the philosopher's explanation of the source of this "dictation," which was called the "speaking-to-us of Being" (Zuspruch des Seins, 369–370).[14] Celan did not elaborate on this important concept here, but he would find it repeatedly in subsequent readings by Heidegger, and he remembered and used it in a later context where it became a fundamental element in his poetic thinking (see chapter 7).

Besides finding validation for his vocation as a poet, Celan also discovered and marked numerous passages throughout this work on the nature and origins of poetic language that coincided with, clarified, and perhaps helped him formulate his own views. A sentence that he marked in the essay "The Origin of the Work of Art" distinguishes between daily and poetic use of language: "Of course the poet also uses the word not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who have to consume them, but rather in such a way that the word only now truly becomes and remains a word" (Zwar gebraucht auch der Dichter das Wort, aber nicht so wie die gewöhnlich Redenden und Schreibenden die Worte verbrauchen müssen, sondern so, dass das Wort erst wahrhaft ein Wort wird und bleibt, 34). Another appealing statement that he marked declares lyric poetry (Poesie) to be the most primordial (die ursprünglichste), precise form of the broader term *poetry* or *Dichtung*. Furthermore, he asserts, "Language itself is poetry (Dichtung) in the essential sense . . . Language is not poetry because it is primordial poetry (Urpoesie); rather, lyric poetry (Poesie) comes into its own in language because language preserves the primordial nature of poetry" (Die Sprache selbst ist Dichtung im wesentlichen Sinne . . . Die Sprache ist nicht deshalb Dichtung weil sie die Urpoesie ist, sondern die Poesie ereignet sich in der Sprache, weil diese das ursprüngliche Wesen der der Dichtung verwahrt, 62). The sparks triggered by these and other congenial ideas would soon begin to find their way into his poetry.

Earliest Traces of Heidegger in Celan's Works, 1953–1954

A few days after completing his reading of *Wrong Paths* Celan turned to a 1947 edition of the thinker's *Letter on Humanism* and, according to dates he entered in the text, read it on August 21 and 23, 1953. Probably this was the edition he mentioned to his wife as having purchased on August 18.[1] His markings suggest that, with one notable exception, he did not engage it with quite the same intensity evident in *Wrong Paths*. The copy in his posthumous library is devoid of comments, though some passages have marginal markings and underlines. Most marked passages contain ideas with which he seems to have agreed or identified himself. One continues an assertion similar to what he had read in *Wrong Paths* when it noted that the poet lives in "namelessness," a formulation that must have resonated with the isolated Jewish exile in Paris who was struggling to articulate his existence generally and the unspeakability of the Holocaust specifically:

> If man is once again to come into the vicinity of Being, he must first learn to exist in namelessness. He must recognize equally the seduction of the public and the powerlessness of the private. Before he speaks, he must allow himself again to be spoken to by Being and risk the danger that in being spoken to he will have little or rarely have something to say.
>
> [Soll aber der Mensch noch einmal in die Nähe des Seins finden, dann muss er zuvor lernen, im Namenlosen zu existieren. Er muss in gleicher Weise sowohl die Verführung durch die Öffentlichkeit als auch die Ohnmacht des Privaten erkennen. Der Mensch muss, bevor er spricht, erst vom Sein sich wieder ansprechen lassen auf die Gefahr, dass er unter diesem Anspruch wenig oder selten etwas zu sagen hat.] (*G* 9:319)

Elsewhere Celan underlined sentences relating to Heidegger's use and explication of "the ec-static" of "ex-istence" (*G* 9:323–324, 326, 327, 329–330, 332,

345) and of Being, forgetfulness of Being, the clearing (Lichtung), and silence (Schweigen), but he leaves them without commentary.

He also noted Heidegger's claim that the thinker's Saying brings the unspoken word or truth of Being to language, and his markings suggest that he was taken with Heidegger's notion that thinkers and poets engage in the same fundamental task of recovering this truth. He underlined Heidegger's concurrence with Aristotle's claim that poetry is truer than history: "But the inadequately considered word of Aristotle in his Poetics is still valid, viz. that Poetry is truer than the exploration of that which is" (Aber immer noch gilt das kaum bedachte Wort des Aristoteles in seiner Poetik, dass das Dichten wahrer sei als das Erkunden von Seiendem, *G* 9:363). In marking two passages in which the thinker excoriates modern technology, the poet seemed to suggest that he shared those views. But Heidegger's arguments on the bankruptcy of humanism in our age and the apparent loss of traditional values, which he attributes to other philosophers' unwillingness to confront the question of Being, elicited almost no reaction from Celan at this time, though Celan was not far from Heidegger in his views that poetry had suffered a similar fate in the contemporary world.

Language as the House of Being

During his intense reading of *Wrong Paths* in 1953, a passage on the nature of poetic language in the essay "What Are Poets For?" prompted Celan to enter double lines and write the word *language* [Sprache] in the margin. The passage reads, "Being, as itself, marks off its domain, which is measured (temnein, tempus) by Being's being present in the word. Language is the domain (templum), viz. the house of Being . . . [the] temple of Being" (Das Sein durchmisst es selbst als seinen Bezirk, der dadurch bezirkt wird [temnein, tempus], dass es im Wort west. Die Sprache ist der Bezirk [templum], d.h. das Haus des Seins . . . [der] Tempel des Seins, *G* 5:310). In connecting humankind's dwelling in the temple of Being with the poet's role as a seer in that temple, Heidegger made an allegorical move that must have appealed to Celan's belief in writing poetry as a higher calling.

Only a few days after finishing *Wrong Paths,* Celan again encountered the image of language as the temple or house of Being in Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism*, where it occurs in at least nine passages. His underlining of several of those passages suggests that they caught the poet's attention and probably left a trace in a poem he wrote soon after reading *A Letter on Humanism.*

In these passages Heidegger either mentions briefly or expands on his assertion that humans dwell in a house of language. This metaphoric "house" pro-

vides shelter, for by dwelling therein, humans are closest to, and in a sense protected by, "the truth of Being" (der Wahrheit des Seins, *G* 9:318, 333). Repeatedly in his writings after this period Heidegger would use this image of language as a house or shelter for humankind, though the trope was not original with him. Celan could have known it, for example, from the Austrian poet Karl Kraus, who used it in a 1917 poem entitled "Confession" ("Bekenntnis"), where the poetic voice speaks of itself as "one of the epigones, / who dwells in the old house of language" (Ich bin nur einer von den Epigonen, / die in dem alten Haus der Sprache wohnen).[2] But its role as the central image in the poem "With a Changing Key," which Celan wrote in the fall of 1953, soon after encountering it repeatedly and emphatically in Heidegger's *Wrong Paths* and *A Letter on Humanism* in August of the same year, seems more than coincidental. The poem identifies the poet's word as the key with which to unlock this apparently desolate house of language:

With a Changing Key

With a changing key
you unlock the house where
the snow of what's silenced is driven.
Just like the blood that flows from
your eye or mouth or ear,
so your key changes.
Your key changes, the word changes
that may drive with the flakes
Just like the wind that rebuffs you,
the snow is packed round your word

[Mit Wechselndem Schlüssel

Mit wechselndem Schlüssel
schließt du das Haus auf, darin
der Schnee des Verschwiegenen treibt
Je nach dem Blut, das dir quillt
aus Aug oder Mund oder Ohr,
wechselt dein Schlüssel.
Wechselt dein Schlüssel, wechselt dein Wort,
das treiben darf mit den Flocken.
Je nach dem Wind, der dich fortstößt,
ballt um das Wort sich der Schnee.] (*GW* 1:112)

To say that Heidegger "inspired" this poem would not be totally accurate. Celan had taken its title and what one critic has seen as some of its ideas from a book he read in 1953 about pre-Socratic thinkers that speaks of a large gate separating day and night to which the goddess Dike holds the "changing keys."[3] But that source does not deal with the poem's central image, which is the house that the poet attempts to unlock, apparently unsuccessfully, in the midst of wind and driving snow. Language, the house of Being, still stands, and apparently the poet seeks refuge in this house by varying uses of his key, which is his poetry. But apparently the house no longer offers the protection it did in Heidegger's thought, for "the snow of what's silenced" is blowing through it.

This image of something that has been silenced also might have had its origins in Heidegger. While reading *Wrong Paths,* shortly before he wrote the poem, Celan came across a passage in which Heidegger speaks of a poem by Hölderlin, where, according to Heidegger's reading, the three dots of an ellipsis represent "that which is silenced" (das Verschwiegene, *G* 5:318)—the same word that Celan uses in his poem. It appears to be more than coincidence that each cites the same infrequently used noun denoting something that has been silenced. Celan intensifies the image by engulfing whatever it is that has been silenced with a blanket of cold and snow.

If this "snow of what's silenced" is associated with suppressed or silenced language, it has several possible meanings. It might be read, for example, as Germany's general refusal to discuss the events of its recent past. It also might reflect the poet's own exposure and isolation in a world that has left him engulfed in a speech crisis. Probably both meanings, and no doubt others, are at work. The poet still possesses the word as the key to his house of language—his poetic word—but as rapidly as he attempts to open the door to his house through poetic speech, his key is again enshrouded in inarticulation. If Heidegger was, in fact, the source for these basic images, this desperate figurative act of poetic survival in an adverse climate is only one of several examples of Celan's ability to borrow words, images, or concepts he found in the thinker, to translate them into his own poetic world, and to obscure or conceal his sources.

The Poet as Ferryman: Celan's Direct "Translation" from Heidegger

While reading *Wrong Paths* in August 1953, Celan marked two passages where the author played on the different meanings produced by two ways of accenting the verb *übersetzen.* The more common usage with the accent on the

third syllable means "to translate." The less frequent meaning, which accents the first syllable and turns it into a separable verb prefix, means roughly "to transport or transfer" something from one point to another. Its most common usage refers to ferrying humans, animals, or goods across a river, strait, or other body of water. To distinguish the two meanings in English, I will render the second usage with "transferal" or "transport."

Early in *Wrong Paths* Celan read: "Beneath the seemingly literal and thus faithful translation there is concealed, rather, a transferal of Greek experience into a different mode of thinking. Roman thought takes over the Greek words without a corresponding, equally equiprimordial experience of what they say, without the Greek word" (Vielmehr verbirgt sich hinter der anscheinend wörtlichen und somit bewahrenden Übersetzung eine Übersetzen griechischer Erfahrung in eine andere Denkungsart. Das römische Denken übernimmt die griechischen Wörter ohne die entsprechende gleichursprüngliche Erfahrung dessen, was sie sagen, ohne das griechische Wort, *G* 5:8). The second passage he read begins: "Perhaps we should learn to consider what can happen in translating. The actual fateful encounter of historical languages is a quiet event. But in it the destiny of Being speaks" (Doch vielleicht lernen wir bedenken, was sich im Übersetzen ereignen kann. Die eigentliche geschickliche Begegnung der geschichtlichen Sprachen ist ein stilles Ereignis. In ihm spricht aber das Geschick des Seins, *G* 5:371). Celan then underlined the following sentences, which use the word in its second meaning, and he made two pencil slashes in the margin next to them: "Into what language does the Occident transfer?" (In welche Sprache setzt das Abend-Land über? *G* 5:371).

A few months after reading this, Celan made it unambiguously clear that he took the second meaning of transferal or transport directly from this and later readings in Heidegger. Besides incorporating this meaning into his thinking, he poeticized it by creating the metaphoric figure of the ferryman to represent the poet and the act of transporting or carrying something across a body of water as a representation of transferring a poem into language. In a letter of May 1, 1954, to Peter Schifferli, a Zurich publisher for whom he was translating Picasso's play *Le désir attrapé par la queue,* he wrote:

> A first draft is now finished. A first draft, for the Picasso text doesn't just want to be translated. It also—if I may misuse a term from Heidegger—wants to be transferred. You see: occasionally for me it is a question of performing a ferryman's service. May I hope that in remuneration for my work not only the lines, but also the number of oar strokes are counted?

[Eine erste Fassung ist nun beendet. Eine erste Fassung: der Text will nämlich nicht nur ubersetzt, sondern auch-wenn ich ein Heidegger-Wort missbrauchen darf-übergesetzt sein. Sie sehen: es handelt sich für mich-mitunter—um eine Art Fergendienst. Darf ich also hoffen, dass bei der Honorierung meiner Arbeit nicht nur die Zeilen, sondern auch die Ruderschläge gezählt werden?][4]

A few months after this use of the metaphor of a ferryman carrying one language across into another, Celan took the same image he had created from Heidegger's use of the word *übersetzen* to represent transferal from one shore to another and assimilated it into one of his poems, the first of several to do so. Few metaphors or concepts he borrowed from the thinker would prove so rich.

Celan wrote the following poem on December 5, 1954:

From Darkness to Darkness

You opened your eyes—I see my darkness live.
I see to its foundation:
There too it's mine and lives.
Does that ferry across? And awakens while doing so?
Whose light follows at my heels
For a ferryman to appear?

[Von Dunkel zu Dunkel

Du schlugst die Augen auf—ich seh mein Dunkel leben
Ich seh ihm auf den Grund:
auch da ists mein und lebt.
Setzt solches über? Und erwacht dabei?
Wes Licht folgt auf dem Fuß mir,
dass sich ein Ferge fand?] (*GW* 1:97)

Perhaps no concept he found in Heidegger played a more important role in helping him articulate his poetic theory than this one. A passage from *On the Way to Language* that Celan read and marked in 1954 shortly before writing "From Darkness to Darkness" elaborates on it and its meaning. There Heidegger used the metaphor of a river to ask if this "stream of silence" were not the "saying" that connects the bank of primordial speech with the bank of ordinary speech: "Or is Saying the stream of silence which, in forming them, joins its own two banks—the Saying and our saying after it?" (Oder ist die Sage der Strom der Stille, der selbst seine Ufer, das Sagen und unser Nachsagen, verbindet, indem er sie bildet? *G* 12:244).

Celan's creation of the metaphor of the poet as a ferryman allows for a num-

ber of readings, all of which were consonant with his emerging poetic theories. Heidegger's metaphor of the river suggests that the poet-ferryman is the rare individual who transfers unspoken primordial language across this gulf of silence into a poetic language. This would explain his admitted admiration for and attraction to Celan's poetry after he first began reading it shortly after this poem was written. The poet-ferryman might also be seen as one who crosses the general barrier of silence that separates the unspeakable or unspoken from the spoken language. In reference to Celan's personal life, it might be read as his transporting his Otherness as a non-German Jew into the realm of contemporary German speech.[5] It could also be read as a metaphor for his effort to transport the muted voices of Holocaust victims from silence into speech. Celan himself raises yet another possibility. In a letter to Werner Weber (March 26, 1960) about a recently completed translation of Valéry's *La jeune Parque,* he insisted that languages, for all their similarities, are not only different but are separated by "abysses" (Abgründe). Figuratively, he says, the ferryman's task is to transport his language over this abyss, while retaining awareness of the two shores.[6] Gellhaus sees the poet's efforts to write in a German that had been dehumanized and almost destroyed by the Third Reich as an attempt to cross the abyss that separated the poetic voice within him from contemporary German.[7] The multiple but overlapping readings of this concept might be summarized by George Steiner's assertion: "All of Celan's own poetry is translated into German."[8]

Occurrences of the poet's figurative "ferryman's service" inherent in various uses of the term *übersetzen,* or slightly altered versions of that transferal metaphor, run like a red thread through subsequent poems. "Forested" ("Waldig"), written soon after "From Darkness to Darkness," speaks of the Word being "crowded" or "flocked around" by the world until it has become "cursed," presumably with the curse of silence. The addressee in the poem, who represents the poet, saves what has been "cursed" by an act of transferal akin to that of a ferryman, though this act occurs in a forest:

> You cradle it down through the fire line,
> Which, deep in the tree-glow, yearns for snow
> You cradle it over to the Word
> Which there names what is white on you.
> [Du wiegst es hinab durch die Schneise
> die tief in der Baumglut nach Schnee giert,
> du wiegst es hinüber zum Wort,
> das dort nennt, was schon weiß ist an dir.] (*GW* 1:116)

The closing stanza of the 1960 poem "The Sluice" ("Die Schleuse") again makes this poetic act explicit by describing how the word is saved by its being ferried across a narrow channel into a "salt flood":

Through
the sluice I had to go
to salvage the word back into
and out of and across the salt flood:
Yizkor
[Durch
die Schleuse musst ich,
das Wort in die Salzflut zurück-
und hinaus-und hinüberzuretten:
Jizkor] (*GW* 1:222)

The 1963 poem "Your Dream" ("Dein vom Wachen stößiger Traum") uses the word *übersetzen* in its second meaning and makes explicit the image of a ferryboat that transfers something of the speaker's suffering to another realm:

In the ver-
tical narrow
dayravine, the upward
poling ferry:

It carries
painful readings across.
[Die in der senk-
rechten, schmalen
Tagschlucht nach oben
stakende Fähre:

sie setzt
Wundgelesenes über.] (*GW* 2:24)

Another 1963 poem, "In the Snake Wagon" ("Im Schlangenwagen"), perhaps a reference to a boat, repeats the image of the "flood" (Flut) and portrays someone crossing the water past a white cypress tree, in antiquity a symbol of the river Lethe:

In the Snake Wagon, past
the white cypress tree,
through the flood
they carried you.
[Im Schlangenwagen, an
der weißen Zypresse vorbei,
durch die Flut
Fuhren sie dich.] (*GW* 2:27)

In the 1965 poem "Easter Smoke" ("Osterqualm") Celan again turned to this metaphor, though partially obscuring it through catachrestic usage. The opening stanza's reference to the wake or keel track of a boat and the fifth stanza's mention of nets suggest a figurative crossing of water connected with language. The image in stanza 3 of a group that joyfully anticipates passage from one point to another ("überfahrtsfroh") extends the theme, except that the group appears to be located in a desert, a possible allusion to the children of Israel. The boat ("Kahn") in the final stanza that is to transport this "guest people" again evokes the image Celan derived from Heidegger of poetry as an act of transferal from one realm to another. Three stanzas will illustrate:

Eastersmoke, flooding, with
the letter-like
wake in the midst.
. . . . . .
We here, we,
joyfully awaiting passage before the tent
where you baked desert bread
out of camp-following language
. . . . . .
the guest people with us
in the boat.
[Osterqualm, flutend, mit
der buchstabenähnlichen
Kielspur inmitten.
. . . . . .
Wir hier, wir,
überfahrtsfroh, vor dem Zelt
wo du Wüstenbrot bukst

aus mitgewanderter Sprache
. . . . . .
das Gastvolk, mit uns
im Kahn.] (*GW* 2:85)

A 1967 poem entitled "Hush" or, in another reading, "Silence" ("Stille") also draws on this familiar form of poetic utterance as a transferal, except that the ferryman is now an old hag, and the crossing does not traverse a calm river but rapids: "HUSH, you ferrying hag, and transport me across the rapids. / Eyelid fire, flame ahead" (STILLE, Fergenvettel, fahr mich durch die Schnellen. / Wimpernfeuer, leucht voraus, *GW* 2:170). The rendering of the lead metaphor is misleading, since the first word contains an untranslatable ambiguity. Read as an imperative, which the second line appears to be, the first word seems to denote a command to the ferryman to be still and carry the poetic voice into speech. Equally possible is that this first word is not used as a command but a form of address and that the hag being addressed is a personification of silence itself. A rough translation might read, "Silence, you hag; ferry me across the rapids." Either way, the metaphor clearly reveals signs of its origin in Heidegger.

Another poem the same year, entitled "Out There" ("Draußen," *GW* 2:223), extends this metaphor by describing some sort of sea voyage in a sailing ship. It also coins a nonexistent word that resides somewhere between a "traveling man" and a ferryman: *Fahrensmann*. Finally, an allusion to the ferryman's role in transporting the unspeakable into language is evident in a stanza of "Near, in the Aorta's Arch" ("Nah, im Aortenbogen, *GW* 2:202).

Mother Rachel
weeps no more
Carried across now
all of the weeping.
[Mutter Rahel
weint nicht mehr.
Rübergetragen
Alles Geweinte.] (Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 303)

Felstiner, who identified the Yiddish song from which Celan adapted this stanza, points out that the original text contained the word *aribertrogen,* which means "to endure."[9] Celan's rendering with the colloquial term *Rübergetragen* endows the word with the German meaning "to carry across." Though phonetic echoes of the original still remain, this new lexical meaning places it in the vicin-

ity of Heidegger's double sense of the word *übersetzen* in its reference to both "transporting" and "translating."

In spoken German the past participle of the verb *übertragen* functions like and is synonymous with the term *übersetzen*. When accented on the third syllable, it means to "translate" or "transcribe." Accented on the first, that syllable becomes a separable prefix, and the word means "to carry over, transport, or transfer." Also written in 1967, this poem and those cited above all illustrate the power that a single concept, which Celan discovered in Heidegger in 1953 and "translated" into his own poetic world, continued to exert on his writing over the course of fourteen years.

In September 1953, a month after finishing his reading of *A Letter on Humanism*, Celan turned to Heidegger's work *On the Essence of Truth (Vom Wesen der Wahrheit)*, a copy of which he acquired and read in September 1953. The edition he owned is missing from his posthumous library in Marbach, but according to Stefan Reichert, who catalogued the poet's library in the years following his death, he entered the date of acquisition (or reading?) on page 2, and the opening lines of his poem "Forested" ("Waldig" *GW* 1:116) on the inside back cover.[10] Without access to the text he read, however, any attempt to establish specific sources for or connections to his poetry from this particular treatise remains speculative. A similar information gap applies to another work he probably read sometime between 1952 and 1954 but that also has disappeared from his posthumous library: Heidegger's *On the Essence of Reason (Vom Wesen des Grundes)*. In 1952 Celan had sent a dedicated copy of it to Ingeborg Bachmann, which is in her posthumous library.[11] This suggests that he already might have read it by that time. Concrete evidence that he did know it surfaces in 1960, when he was working on notes for a theory of poetry. By this time he had read at least fourteen works by Heidegger, but he lists only two titles that apparently were especially important to his current project—*Being and Time* and *On the Essence of Reason*.[12] But without access to the copy he read, his response to and possible indebtedness to the latter work also remain a matter of conjecture. If, however, one assumes that he engaged either of these works with the intensity that he brought to his other readings of Heidegger between 1952 and 1954, they, too, must have left lasting, though no longer clearly identifiable, marks on Celan's developing ideas about poetry.

Celan's Notebook on What Is Called Thinking *and* Introduction to Metaphysics, *1954*

On November 23, 1953, Celan's Viennese friends Klaus and Nani Demus sent him a copy of Heidegger's *Explications of Hölderlin's Poetry* with their names and the date inscribed inside. In light of their friend's earlier resistance to Heidegger, it seems likely that they did it because they had heard—probably through the correspondence between Klaus Demus and Celan, which is still sealed—of the poet's recent interest in that thinker. Oddly enough, this copy contains no reading dates, and the lack of markings in it suggests either that Celan failed to read it at all or did so superficially. Given the strong kinship he felt toward Hölderlin, including the poem "Tübingen, January" ("Tübingen, Jänner," *GW* 1:226), in which he addressed the poet's madness, this is surprising. Even more surprising, however, was that less than a year later he responded enthusiastically to two additional works by Heidegger. His experience with them represents a high water mark in his engagement with and receptivity to the German thinker's ideas.

From September 19 to October 30, 1954, the poet and his wife resided at the artists' colony La Rustique Olivette in La Ciotat, on the Mediterranean coast of southern France. During that time he immersed himself in Heidegger by reading *An Introduction to Metaphysics* and *What Is Called Thinking*. Their dates of publication—*Introduction to Metaphysics* had appeared the previous year, and *What is Called Thinking* was published in 1954—suggest that, among other things, he wanted to catch up on the philosopher's latest thinking. But given Celan's apparently cool reaction to Heidegger's book on Hölderlin, the question of what motivated him to engage Heidegger as intensely as he now did remains a matter of conjecture. But engage him he did, and enthusiastically.

While reading these works, the poet did something unusual that reflects the importance of this particular encounter. He produced a separate thirty-page notebook into which he copied passages from these two works and registered his responses to or ideas generated by them.[1] His notebook gives September 21 as the date he began reading and taking notes from *What Is Called Thinking*. His responses to this work, which refer by page number to passages in sequential order from the beginning to the end, fill the first thirteen pages of the notebook. Based on a starting date of September 23—which he entered on page 14 of the notebook, at the beginning of his notes on *Introduction to Metaphysics*—he had worked through and made notes on *What Is Called Thinking* in just two days. The notes on *Introduction to Metaphysics* fill the remaining seventeen pages. The nearly illegible handwriting of certain entries suggests that they were scribbled in haste and with considerable intensity.

Yet another reading date of October 7, 1954, that he entered in the text of *Introduction to Metaphysics* suggests that he reread it soon after taking notes on it during the first work-through. The 1954 version of *What Is Called Thinking* from which he worked has disappeared from his posthumous library, but extensive underlinings, marginal strikings, and personal notations he made in the extant copy of *Introduction to Metaphysics,* as well as notes in the thirty-page notebook, also suggest that he read *What Is Called Thinking* more than once. The fact that marked passages in the text itself often differ from those that he commented on and copied into his notebook also suggest that he wrote them at different times.

Unequivocally clear from the notebook, however, is the impact these two works had on him. Besides acting as a catalyst in the formulation of his own aesthetic theories, they generated specific words and images that he would later use in explicating that theory; they prompted him to write fragmentary short poems; and they even produced the draft of a letter that the poet apparently wanted to send to Heidegger. Based on citations from and references or allusions to these two works by Heidegger in his later writings, it is safe to say that they resonated as deeply and as powerfully as anything by Heidegger he would read in his lifetime.

Another indication of their importance is that within a few years he reread *What Is Called Thinking*. Jean Firges, who was writing the first doctoral dissertation on Celan in 1958, reports that when he visited the poet in Paris that year and asked for a single book that would put Firges on the track of questions and problems that occupied him, Celan surprised him by urging him to read *What Is Called Thinking,* a copy of which lay on the desk before him.[2] Four years after

first reading it, it still held an important place in his thinking. And when the poet visited Heidegger in Freiburg on July 24, 1967, the thinker gave him a 1961 edition of *What Is Called Thinking* with a personal dedication in it, a copy of which does exist in Celan's posthumous library. Extensive markings in this edition, some of which correspond to his recorded notes from 1954, also make it clear that during the final two years of his life he read it for the third time and continued to respond to its contents.

Reading *What Is Called Thinking*

An examination of the notebook entries Celan made while reading these two works illuminates what appealed to him. Following the pattern he established the year before with *Wrong Paths,* he read *What Is Called Thinking* on several levels and with several goals in mind. Based on the large number of isolated words, phrases, or idioms he entered without further commentary in his notebook, it seems clear that among other things, he was still trying to expand his German vocabulary. Any native speaker would have been conversant with those he entered, but apparently he was not. They included "to yield a benefit" (einen Nutzen abwerfen, *G* 8:23); "to run at high speed" (auf hohen Touren laufen, *G* 8:31); "all of us, including the speaker" (wir alle, der Sprecher mit einbegriffen, *G* 8:17); "to deny outright" (rundweg leugnen, *G* 8:177); "to engage something critically" (auf etwas kritisch eingehen, *G* 8:181); "to report, make known" (verlautbaren, *G* 8:225); and "bluff, pretence" (Spiegelfechterei, *G* 8:229).

On a poetic level additional notations suggest an ongoing fascination with the thinker's sovereign use of the language, especially obscure words or archaic usages. In one case Celan must have looked up the medieval word *dröseln* (*G* 8:138), for he entered its archaic meaning of "spinning a thread" in the margin. Other examples include uncommon words for *corral/pen* (Pferch, *G* 8:100) and *blockade/siege* (Zernierung, *G* 8:23). He was also drawn to Heidegger's own coinages, which he must have known were not lexically attested in standard German. He wrote down, for example, untranslatable word creations such as "das Gemächte" (*G* 8:23), "das Gähe" (*G* 8:15), "insgleichen" (*G* 8:28), and "Umkippungen" (G 8:83), all of which, similar to much of Celan's vocabulary, might have sounded faintly familiar to German speakers, though, in fact, they were unattested. And his encounter with the word for "wind shadow" (Windschatten, *G* 8:20), a technical term from sailing that he underlined, might have been the source for an appearance of this word in a poem written three years later entitled "White and Light" ("Weiß und leicht," *GW* 1:165), where it made a single appearance in his poetry.

In other entries where he responded to what he was reading, he underlined, reproduced, or paraphrased new ideas that he found congenial with his own thought. Heidegger's tendency after his early years to see thinkers as kindred spirits to poets, ones who were engaged in a similar project, obviously appealed to him. Without commentary Celan copied out one passage: "because no thinker, no more than a poet, understands himself" (weil kein Denker, so wenig wie ein Dichter, sich selbst versteht, *G* 8:188). When he reread this work after 1967, he reacted to the passage with a marginal slash. He also transcribed into his notebook an entire sentence that further emphasized the commonality between thinking and poetry: "Probably we can never adequately consider what poetry is so long as we have not asked sufficiently, 'what is called thinking?'" (vermutlich können wir nie recht bedenken was Dichtung sei, solange wir nicht zureichend gefragt haben, "Was heißt Denken?" *G* 8:166). Like several other passages, this one generated the familiar letter *i* next to it in his notebook, one of the obvious ways in which he signaled that Heidegger was giving him ideas on how he might clarify and formulate his own thoughts about language and poetry. Heidegger's phrase "primordial speaking" (ursprüngliches Sprechen, *G* 8:189) also generated an *i* in the margin and triggered Celan's own notation: "primordial speaking. Poetry as prim. sp.: cf. Langage à l'état naissant (Valéry)" (ursprüngliches Sprechen. Dichten als urspr. Spr.: vgl. Langage à l'état naissant [Valéry], *B* 405). This idea reverberated so strongly with his own thinking that he would return to and elaborate on this Valéry citation again in his notes on *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

He also wrote another *i*, apparently triggered by Heidegger's comments on Hölderlin, next to his own statement that reads, "Poems: *A shrine without a temple*" (Gedichte: *Tempelloser Schrein, B* 406). Was he possibly taking issue with the thinker's connection between the Latin *templum* as the house of Being, which he had come across in *Wrong Paths* and again here? Had contemporary poetic language been defiled to the point that it no longer functioned to provide spiritual shelter or protection in an age that, in contrast to Hölderlin's, had abandoned the view of poetry as something sacred?

In reaction to a statement on page 215 he entered an *i* in his notebook and added his observation: "Receptivity as the fundamental stance in writing poetry" (Rezeptivität als Grundverhalten beim Dichten, *B* 406). This formulation appears to be a step in his development toward his view expressed in his 1960 "Meridian" speech that the poet receives his language through "attentiveness," which could be seen as an extension of or elaboration on Heidegger's notion of "receptivity."[3]

More evidence for Celan's intense, congenial reaction to this work appears in other concepts he encountered during this 1954 reading and perhaps again in 1958. Since they surface in later works, and since no other sources have been identified, it seems likely they originated during this encounter with *What Is Called Thinking*. One is the concept of poetry as a craft.

A year earlier, in *Wrong Paths,* the poet had read a passage in which Heidegger distinguished between work produced by hand, that is, a craft (he uses the German *Handwerk*), and mass-produced goods. Heidegger's comment that the term *Handwerk* itself is a "curious play on words" (ein merkwürdiges Spiel der Sprache, *G* 8:46) provoked a strong reaction in Celan, whose rejoinder in the margin read: "no, not at all curious if, by language, only etymology is understood" (nein, durchaus nicht merkwürdig, wenn unter Sprache nur Etymologie verstanden wird, *B* 358). He appears to be objecting to Heidegger's literal reading of the term *Handwerk,* for as will be demonstrated below, he considered working with hands to be an accurate, albeit figurative, representation of the poet's craft. Further reading on this topic in *What Is Called Thinking* allowed him to clarify this connection between poetry and "Handwerk," or craft.

Heidegger's elaboration on thinking as a craft extends over several pages and compares this activity to the work of a cabinetmaker (*G* 8:16–21, 25–27). In noting how the craftsman succeeds only if he establishes an especially compatible relationship with the various forms of wood with which he works, Celan transcribed verbatim a sentence into his notebook that points out how a craftsman who lacks this "correspondence" (Entsprechung) with his material reduces that craft to busywork. The same danger, Heidegger claims, applies to creative activity: "Poetry is no more exempt from this than thinking" (Das Dichten ist hiervon so wenig ausgenommen wie das Denken, *G* 8:17).

Celan not only found the idea of poetry as a craft compatible, but he also incorporated it into his own aesthetic theory. In an oft-cited letter of May 18, 1960, to Hans Bender, he echoed Heidegger's basic idea with his own assertion that "craft is . . . the prerequisite of all poetry" (Handwerk ist . . . Voraussetzung aller Dichtung, *GW* 3:177). His elaboration of the same idea in *Introduction to Metaphysics,* which will be discussed below, seems to confirm his affinity with the thinker's reflections on this topic.

Another piece of circumstantial evidence for the generative effect of *What Is Called Thinking* involves the connection between the phrases "to think" and "to thank," which Celan probably encountered here for the first time. The poet began his Bremen speech in 1958 by claiming, "Thinking and thanking in our language are words from one and the same source"[4] (Denken und Danken sind in

unserer Sprache Worte ein und desselben Ursprungs, *GW* 3:185). Here he was repeating what he found in Heidegger's *What Is Called Thinking* in 1954 about their common etymology and their connection with memory (*G* 8:142–147, 149–152). Though he subsequently found it repeated in other works by Heidegger, this first encounter clearly resonated strongly and apparently stayed with him for years.

A Draft Letter to Heidegger?

These examples of Celan's responses give us a sense of how deeply this work spoke to him, but an entry at the end of his notes on *What Is Called Thinking* makes it clear that his was no detached intellectual encounter. It seems he felt that Heidegger was talking to him, and he wanted to reply. Spontaneously, and without warning, he entered in his notebook some of the most unusual sentences he ever produced—enthusiastic, almost ecstatic drafts of what he conceived as a greeting to Heidegger, which he probably intended as part of an introductory letter. Their tone of adulation, which is uncharacteristic of this generally critical, reserved writer, bespeaks admiration, appreciation, and above all an affinity between himself, a relatively obscure young poet, and the renowned thinker. One of these attempts, almost poetic in quality, reads as follows:

> To Martin Heidegger.
> This timid greeting from a wish-resounding, wish-animated
> neighborhood
> [An Martin Heidegger
> Dieser schüchterne Gruss aus einer wunschdurchklungenen,
> wunschbeseelten Nachbarschaft] (*B* 409)

Another reads:

> To Martin Heidegger
> from the sea these lines of admiration from a small, distant
> wish-resounding neighborhood
> [An Martin Heidegger
> (vom Meer her diese Zeilen der Verehrung aus einer kleinen fernen
> wunschdurchklungenen Nachbarschaft] (*B* 409)

Yet another contains a wordplay and related greeting:

> To Martin Heidegger
> The Thinking-Herr

On the way across the Angels' Bay
[Herrn Martin Heidegger
dem Denk-Herrn
auf dem Weg über die Engelsbucht] (*B* 410)

Composed in paradoxes characteristic of all his poetry, these lines refer to the distance that separates the two men physically as opposed to the proximity the younger poet senses spiritually between himself and the world-renowned thinker. They might also be read as a metaphor for the proximity of thought that linked the men as opposed to the distance in political views that separated them, though the latter—at least for the moment—did not appear to be on Celan's mind. The statement about a "wish-resounding, wish-animated neighborhood [proximity]" seems to suggest a desire to enter into a dialogue and discuss what clearly resonated with and appealed to him in Heidegger's thought.

The phrase "on the way across the Angels' Bay" is his own transliteration into German of the French name "Bay of Angels" ("Baie de Anges"), the location of the artists' colony on the Mediterranean where he was staying. Its suggestion of a spiritual or intellectual connection across a physical barrier that divided the two men might be read as a desire for dialogue with the "Thinking-Herr." Like so much of Celan's writing, this ironic wordplay works on several levels. Spoken with only slight elision, this conflation of the sound of two words ("Thinking-Herr" [Denk-Herr]) into one can be made to sound like the German word for "thinker" (Denker). Semantically the term also plays on the ambivalence of the word *Herr*. Besides acknowledging Heidegger's role as one of the dominant thinkers of his century, its proximity to a place-name referring to angels evokes an inescapable connection to the word *Herr* as the Christian designation for the Lord. Yet underlying the obvious irony, there also seems to be a sense of appreciation and recognition.

Reading *Introduction to Metaphysics*

Celan began making notebook entries about *Introduction to Metaphysics* on the pages immediately following this draft letter. But in the text itself he also entered separate underlinings, marginal markings, and notations, many of which refer to passages different from those to which his notebook entries responded. Taken together, they confirm that this work, too, made an unusually strong impact on him.

Again the words from the text that he entered in his notebook illustrate his

interest in expanding his basic German vocabulary, for he transcribed without commentary many conventional words or phrases that apparently were unfamiliar to him: "not to be deceived by superficial appearances" (dich durch den Augenschein [nicht] täuschen lassen, *G* 40:7); "in one stroke" (mit einem Schlag, *G* 40:13–14); "not to say" (geschweige denn, *G* 40:35); "to falsify (the spirit falsified into intelligence)" (zu etwas einfälschen [der zur Intelligenz eingefälschte Geist], *G* 40:50); "used up and worn out" (verbraucht und vernutzt, *G* 40:54); "thousands and thousands of trees" (tausende und abertausende von Bäumen, *G* 40:85); "from the two aforementioned" (von den beiden vorgenannten, *G* 40:124); and so forth. And again he underlined some of Heidegger's own coinages or creative usages, for example the terms for "event" (Geschehnis, *G* 40:4),[5] "isness" (Seiendheit, *G* 40:23–24),[6] a "word idol" (ein Wortgötze, *G* 40:36), or "contending sep-arations of Being" (gegenwendige Aus-einander-setzungen des Seins, *G* 40:158).[7] Clearly he found something appealing in these unusual formulations.

Some of the impact Celan experienced might have derived from a statement he read several times in Heidegger's late writings: that the German language, along with Greek, was "both the most powerful and spiritual [intellectual]" (die mächtigste und geistigste zugleich, *G* 40:61) of all languages for expressing thinking. Since Celan knew that Heidegger saw thinking and poetry as deriving from essentially the same source, this apparently struck a responsive chord, for an entry in his notebook alludes to the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal's similar claim: "The Greek within German of which Hofmannsthal speaks" (das Griechische am Deutschen, von dem Hofmannsthal spricht, *B* 352). In the conflict Celan felt over writing in the language of his parents' murderers, which was also inescapably his mother tongue, Heidegger here (and Hofmannsthal elsewhere) might have given him unintended encouragement to stay with that language.

Introduction to Metaphysics also resonated for other reasons. Judging by his underlines and marginal strikings, Celan concurred with Heidegger's unmitigated critique of technology and its destructive effect on thought and poetry in the present age (*G* 40:41–50). What clearly exerted the greatest pull on him at this point, however, were the thinker's reflections on language. He responded approvingly, for example, with markings or notations on Heidegger's view of poetic language as articulating Being (*G* 40:44); to his discourse on the Greeks' view of the optical importance of written language, which he marked with an *i* (*G* 40:68–69); and to the assertion that language is not a human creation, but equiprimordial with Being (*G* 40:140, 165–166). Furthermore, he seemed to agree with the thinker's explanation of the poet's task as one that contrasts dramati-

cally with Dilthey's view that poets are original creators who use words as tools to write from or about their experiences. And it appears that he approved of Heidegger's assertion that the poet brings about the unconcealedness or revealing of Being by recovering and articulating primordial language that precedes the language of human creation. Thus, in Heidegger's view the poet who articulates the unspokenness of Being is not an original creator in the sense of an "Erlebnisdichter" but an instrument, or perhaps a mediator, in bringing that unsaid aspect of Being into language (*G* 40:141, 166, 168, 172).

His markings and notations also indicate that Celan paid special attention to Heidegger's claims about the violence connected with the act of poetic speech (die Gewalttätigkeit des dichterischen Sagens, *G* 40:166), since it requires "a taming and ordering of powers by virtue of which that which it opens up as such when a human moves into it" (ein Bändigen und Fügen der Gewalten, kraft deren das Seiende sich als ein solches erschließt, indem der Mensch in dieses einrückt, *G* 40:166). Hence, says Heidegger, a form of violence characterizes the poet's attempts to utter the inexpressible: "The *violent one,* the creative man, who sets forth into the un-said, who breaks into the un-thought, compels the unhappened to happen, and makes the unseen appear . . . stands at all times in venture [and ventures] to master Being"[8] (Der *Gewalt-tätige,* der Schaffende, der in das Un-gesagte ausrückt, in das Un-gedachte einbricht, der das Ungeschehene erzwingt und das Ungeschaute erscheinen macht, dieser Gewalt-tätige steht jederzeit im Wagnis. . . . [und wagt] die Bewältigung des Seins, *G* 40:170).

A number of the poems Celan wrote between 1945 and 1952 employed images of weapons, violence, and struggle. It is not unlikely that his reading of these and related passages provided a congenial explanation for this conscious or unconscious poetic theme.

Developing a Poetic Theory of His Own

As had happened when Celan read *What Is Called Thinking,* his reading of *Introduction to Metaphysics* exposed him to ideas that he found consonant with his own poetic thinking but that he had not yet expressed clearly or at all. At several points in his notebook, and without reference to a specific passage, he stopped copying out material from Heidegger's text and entered his personal ideas or memories about poetry. Obviously Heidegger's text was moving him to reflect on his own career as a poet. One such passage about his beginnings reads, "Recollection: how I recited the first poems (Schiller)" (Rückerinnerung: wie ich die ersten Gedichte [Schiller] aufsagte, *B* 351). The following month he ex-

panded on this earliest encounter with poetry by reporting to Hans Bender that it happened at age six when he recited by memory Schiller's poem "Song of the Bell" ("Das Lied von der Glocke").[9] Roughly a third of all his notebook entries triggered by *Introduction to Metaphysics* contain this type of independent reflections or recollections touched off by his reading. Heidegger's ideas, it seems, were a catalyst that energized him into formulating some of them for the first time.

One entry calls poets "the last guardians of lonelinesses" (die letzten Wahrer der Einsamkeiten, *B* 352), a possible reference to the overwhelming sense of isolation he felt through much of his adult life as a Jewish poet and Holocaust survivor without family. Another echoes Heidegger's notion of the poet's task of bringing the unspoken into language: "Every word, even the most seemingly insignificant, is searching for new combinations, wants to come to language" (Jedes Wort, auch das scheinbar Geringste, sucht neue Zusammenhänge, will zur Sprache, *B* 352). Several formulations in his notebook also became the basis for a poetic theory he was still struggling to articulate. One insight returns to and ruminates on Heidegger's idea that like thinking, poetry is a craft, a concept Celan already knew from *Wrong Paths* and *What Is Called Thinking*. This most recent reflection on the topic reads, "Craft: Hand (reflect on combinations like 'hand and heart') handwork-heartwork. Beginning: 'Poetry as a craft?' The craft-like quality of poetry?" (Handwerk: Hand [Verbindungen nachdenken wie "Hand und Herz"] Handwerk-Herzwerk. Anfang: "Dichten als Handwerk?" Das Handwerkliche am Dichten? *B* 351).

Sometime before reading *Introduction to Metaphysics,* Celan had received an open letter from the West German writer, critic, and editor Hans Bender inquiring about the "why" of his poetry. Intending to publish Celan's answer along with those of other poets he approached, Bender had used the phrase "the craft of poetry" (das Handwerk zum Gedicht).[10] Initially Celan's answer, which he wrote soon after he finished *Introduction to Metaphysics,* expressed discomfort with the notion, since he saw poetry as different from the experimentation with "word materials" that the avant-garde concrete poets of the day were doing, which he saw as a superficial "craft" using words. To make his point, he coined a word to convey that he did not create poems by "experimenting them into existence" (erexpermentieren). But he did not reject the notion, either, and in a 1960 letter to Hans Bender, which contains a partial exposition of his poetic theory, he responded more positively to the image of poetry as a craft that he had learned from Heidegger and "translated" it into a metaphor of writing poetry as a figurative craft performed by the poet's hands:

> Certainly, there is an aspect [of poetry] that people today carelessly designate as *craft* (Handwerk). But . . . craft, like cleanliness in general, is a prerequisite of all poetry . . . Craft [Handwerk]—that is a matter of hands . . . Only true hands write true poems. In principle I see no difference between a handshake and a poem.
>
> [Gewiss, es gibt auch das, was man heute so gern und so unbekümmert als *Handwerk* bezeichnet. Aber . . . Handwerk ist, wie Sauberkeit überhaupt, Voraussetzung aller Dichtung . . . Handwerk-das ist Sache der Hände . . . Nur wahre Hände schreiben wahre Gedichte. Ich sehe keinen prinzipiellen Unterschied zwischen Händedruck und Gedicht.] (*GW* 3:177).

Initially it was Heidegger who supplied him with the conceptual framework for this metaphor.

On another topic, two notebook entries from *Introduction to Metaphysics* anticipate another concept that also turned up in letters to Hans Bender. Each deals with the idea that after writing a poem, the author is "released" from further privileged knowing and that the poem from that point on makes its way independently of its creator. Significantly, each entry uses the same word for "releasing" its author (entlässt). The first claims that all poetry is exposed to misunderstanding. Based on a subsequent passage in which it appears he now uses (or misuses) the word *Bestehen* (duration) to mean *Entstehen* (origination), Celan writes further that the author is at some point released from his privileged understanding: "The poem includes even its author in full understanding only for the time of its duration [origination]—and then also releases him" (das Gedicht nimmt selbst diesen Autor nur für die Dauer seines Bestehens ganz ins Verständnis—und entlässt sodann auch ihn, *B* 352). The second passage adds the image of this release occurring only after the poet has raised the unspoken into the realm of visible language:

> What wonder, then, that . . . even that person who raises the poem into visibility is tolerated as being privy to it only as long as the poem is in the process of originating . . . The author as the one privy to it is again released from this original privileged knowing.
>
> [Was Wunder, dass . . . ja selbst derjenige, der das Gedicht ins Sichtbare hebt, nur so lange als "Mitwisser" geduldet wird, als das Gedicht im Entstehen begriffen ist. Den Autor und "Mitwisser" aus seiner Mitwisserschaft wieder entlässt.] (*B* 352)

Writing to Hans Bender somewhat over a month after jotting this note, he repeats the idea triggered by Heidegger: "I fear it belongs to the essence of the

poem that it tolerates the privileged knowledge of the person who 'produces' it only as long as is necessary for the poem to originate" (Ich fürchte, es gehört zum Wesen des Gedichts, dass es die Mitwisserschaft dessen, der es "hervorbringt," nur so lange duldet, als es braucht, um zu entstehen).[11] When writing to Bender six years later, he again refers to this concept developed while reading Heidegger: "I remember telling you that once the poem is really *there,* the poet is again dismissed from the privileged knowledge he originally had . . . [and] in principle I still hold this—old—view" (Ich erinnere mich, dass ich Ihnen seinerseits sagte, der Dichter werde, sobald das Gedicht wirklich *da* sei, aus seiner ursprünglichen Mitwisserschaft wieder entlassen. Ich . . . bin noch immer dieser—alten—Ansicht, *GW* 3:177).

Two more notations that treat the poem's relation to its time or to time generally appear as preliminary thoughts that would emerge more fully in the "Meridian" speech of 1960. One of these, which uses the term *Lebenszeit* (literally "life-time"), could refer either to how long a poem endures or to biographical events surrounding it. It contains Celan's first attempt to formulate ideas in theoretical terms about a concept and image that permeated his poetry until this point. Though still in nascent form, these reflections on "time" are compelling questions for him and easily might have sprung from reading Heidegger's ideas about time in *Being and Time.* The first notation asks, "Does poetry have permanence at all? And how does it [permanence] relate to the time, the life-time?" (Hat das Dichten überhaupt eine Dauer? Und in welchem Zusammenhang mit der Zeit, der Lebenszeit steht diese Dauer? *B* 351). A second notation on this topic employs the related but uncommon word *Weltzeit* (literally "world-time"): "Poetry stands not so much in relation to time as to a world-time" (Die Dichtung steht nicht zu sehr in einem Verhältnis zur Zeit, sondern zu einer Weltzeit, *B* 351). Although it is unclear what Celan means by either term at this time, Gellhaus asserts that the poet formulated his "world-time" statement in reaction and partial opposition to Heidegger's usage of the word *Weltzeit,* which occurs in a lecture from the summer of 1927 in his *Basic Problems of Phenomenology (Die Grundprobleme der Phenomenologie).*[12] But there is no evidence that Celan ever read or knew this work, and the relative enthusiasm and positive response to Heidegger suggests that at this point he did not view this term as anti-Heideggerian. It may well be that he hit on it independently of Heidegger. But his focus on the topic of "time" and the variations of this signature Heideggerian term suggest that his reading of *Introduction to Metaphysics,* which addresses the concept of "time" repeatedly, was pushing him, even if by provocation, into dialogue and into

formulating more precisely his own theories on one of the most dominant topics in his work.

Another reflection formulated an idea that would surface later. In his notebook he made a notation about "language set free" by repeating and expanding on the same Valéry quote that he recalled and cited while reading *What Is Called Thinking*. Combining the French citation with German and Latin, he now notes, "The poem: language in a nascent state. Language in statu nascendi, i.e. language becoming free" (Poème: langage à l'état naissant. Sprache in statu nascendi also, freiwerdene Sprache, *B* 353). The commonality between this idea and Heidegger's notion of the thinker's or poet's calling as one of bringing the primordial language of Being into unconcealment (that is, of recovering and transforming the unspoken into thought or poetic language) mirrors an affinity of views that Celan returned to in his "Meridian" speech in 1960. There he used a similar trope about the poet's role in liberating language in a nascent state when he spoke of "actualized language, set free under the sign of a . . . radical . . . individuation" (aktualisierte Sprache, freigesetzt under dem Zeichen einer . . . radikalen . . . Individuation" (*GW* 3:197).

One word group among his notations echoes an earlier passage in *Wrong Paths* where the poet, in response to a statement about a word being "dictated" to a thinker, had entered the German word for "inspiration" in the margin (*G* 5:369). Now he seemed to be struggling with this concept, and his reflections center on finding a more accurate description of what it is that moves the poet to write a poem. Sensing that the term *inspiration* suggests "illumination," which he did not want to do, he qualifies it: "The poets:—in spite of inspiration—not a guild of illuminati" (die Dichter—trotz Inspiration—keine Illuminatenzunft, *B* 352). He follows it quickly with a note: "illuminati—(?) the Orphic circles of illuminati" (Illuminat—[?] die orphischen Illuminatenkreise, *B* 689). In his letter to Hans Bender the next month he repeats this skepticism: "Now I by no means want to defend some form of mysterious illuminism" (Nun möchte ich zwar beileibe nicht irgendeinem mysteriösen Illuminatentum das Wort reden).[13]

But he also rejects the process of "experimenting" poems into existence, as the concrete poets were doing. Heidegger had triggered this struggle to define more accurately the process by which poems originated, and it would be Heidegger who, in another work a short time later, offered him a solution that helped him define how his own poetry originated.

On the final pages of his notebook Celan reflected the intensity of his involvement with this work by writing several verse fragments using images common to his poetry of this period: heather (Heidekraut), broom (Ginster), seagull

(Möwe), and mussel (Muschel). But this "inspiration" from Heidegger to produce specific poems was only brief. On balance, the thinker's biggest contribution was to push Celan into an imaginary dialogue in which the grateful, at times enthusiastic, younger man found himself asking questions, clarifying answers, and formulating theories about his own role as a poet.

Doubts Grow and Problems Arise, 1954–1956

The first documented hint of the conflict Celan sensed in dealing with Heidegger's thought surfaces in the margin of a passage he read in *Introduction to Metaphysics* in October 1954. Without commentary, but with obvious feeling, he entered two exclamation marks next to the passage in which Heidegger extols the "inner truth and greatness" (innere Wahrheit und Größe) of the National Socialism movement (*G* 40:208). Shortly before he read *Introduction to Metaphysics,* in late October 1954, and with apparent eagerness to learn more about the thinker, Celan turned to a secondary work on Heidegger that also might have dampened his enthusiasm and problematized some of the attraction he had sensed recently—Karl Löwith's *Heidegger: Thinker in Desolate Times (Heidegger: Denker in dürftiger Zeit),* which had appeared earlier that year. On October 19, 1954, he records finishing this critical assessment of the philosopher's thinking by a former pupil of Heidegger's. With marginal lines next to passages on only fifteen pages, with underlines on three pages, and with only one notation entered in the margin, it appears that Löwith's text did not fascinate him as strongly as Heidegger's did.

Ideas that generated markings centered largely on Löwith's analysis of Heidegger's views of language, though he also reacted with marginal lines next to statements about truth, world history, the present age, and the religious elements that Löwith saw in Heidegger. On the latter topic Celan underlined and marked a passage in the margin that adumbrated and perhaps was the source of a concept to which he returned when he visited Heidegger in 1967 and wrote his poem "Todtnauberg"—the idea of "that-which-is-to-come" (das Kommende). Löwith's description reads, "Whatever the singular god and the many gods of the poet Hölderlin might mean philosophically, Heidegger is thinking toward that-which-is-to-come, toward the anticipated parousie of Being that would open the

Whole and the Holy and make possible within it something like a god" (Was immer der singulare Gott und die vielen Götter des Dichters Hölderlin philosophisch bedeuten mögen, Heidegger denkt auf ein Kommendes hin, auf die erwartete Parusie des Seins, welche das Heile und Heilige eröffnen und in ihm so etwas wie einen Gott ermöglichen soll).[1]

Here Löwith was drawing on an idea to which Celan had been exposed the previous year while reading *Explications of Hölderlin's Poetry:* "It is the time of the departed gods and of the coming god. This is a desolate time because it exists in a double deficiency and nothing: in the no-longer of the departed gods and the not-yet-of that-which-is-to-come" (Es ist die Zeit der entflohenen Götter und des kommenden Gottes. Das ist die dürftige Zeit, weil sie in einem gedoppelten Mangel und Nicht steht: im Nichtmehr der entflohenen Götter und im Nochnicht des Kommenden, *G* 4:47). Judging by Celan's markings in Löwith's account, this concept seems to have registered in a way that it did not when he read Heidegger's exposition of Hölderlin, for there he did not mark the passage, while here he did. More than a decade later, however, he would pick up this signature Heideggerian concept that he found repeated in Löwith and use it in the poem "Todtnauberg" in reference to his hope for a "coming word" from the thinker about his Nazi past.

One other extended passage in Löwith that produced marginal markings and that no doubt registered deeply with the poet dealt with Heidegger's Nazi past, specifically his activities as rector of the University of Freiburg in 1933 and his famous inaugural lecture, entitled "The Self-Assertion of the German University" ("Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität," *G* 16:107).

Since meeting with Ingeborg Bachmann in 1948, Celan had been aware of at least some details of the thinker's Nazi past, but it is unclear how much he knew. Curiously, what he did know elicited almost no known negative written notations or comments to friends between 1948 and 1955. Nor did it deter him from immersing himself in Heidegger's writings between1952 and 1954. Why this poet, who summarily dismissed every other German writer, thinker, or cultural figure who had any hint of a Nazi past, should make an exception with Heidegger is difficult to grasp. In part it might be attributed to his ignorance of details. In large part, however, it probably had to do with the general cultural climate that prevailed in Paris.

Heidegger in France

Heidegger's inaugural lecture as rector had not been reprinted in Germany since it appeared in 1933 and was not available in French translation immedi-

ately after the war. Unless Celan had already read it in Vienna before coming to Paris in 1948, he would not have had easy access to it. And the two books that exposed in detail Heidegger's activities during the Third Reich and provided extensive information on his party membership, his behavior, which many found reprehensible, and his commitment to certain aspects of Nazi ideology did not appear until several years later in Guido Schneeberger's *Ergänzungen zu einer Heidegger-Bibliographie* (1960) and *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (1962). In short, details of his involvement with the Nazi Party were not easy to come by in France at this time, though there was undoubtedly hearsay information available. Furthermore, while reading *Introduction to Metaphysics,* Celan came across several passages in which the thinker unequivocally criticized Nazi ideology and practices (*G* 40:13, 41–42, 51–53). Celan also might have known that the Nazis had removed Heidegger from his professorship in Freiburg. Without more information, however, the poet might have concluded that the philosopher's involvement with the Nazi Party had turned to opposition, which in fact was the position espoused by at least some Parisian intellectuals at the time.

Primarily through Jean-Paul Sartre's mediation, Heidegger's thinking had given rise to existentialism, the dominant Western philosophical movement of the mid-twentieth century. At the time Paris was its center. Soon after the war French philosophers, who were swept up with enthusiasm over this new thinking, began making pilgrimages to see him in Germany. It is difficult to know if they were ignorant of information about Heidegger's activities during the Third Reich or simply ignored or repressed what they did know, but for most of them his Nazi past was not a significant issue. One figure who was representative of this captivation with Heideggerian thought and who made his adherents oblivious to unpleasant biographical details was Prof. Jean Wahl, well known to Parisian students and intellectuals as an influential interpreter of recent international philosophical currents. Teaching at the Sorbonne and his own Le Collège philosophique, he lectured for many semesters during the 1950s on Heidegger's philosophy and represented that thinker and the German writer Ernst Jünger as secret resistance fighters (Jünger, too, had been involved with the Nazi Party). This typical attitude reflected either lack of information about or blind enthusiasm for his subjects, but it was the prevailing view of the day.[2]

Though he had little contact with Parisian intellectuals during his first years, by 1954 Celan had acquired friends and acquaintances in the literary and cultural world and would have been exposed to this position. In July 1954, for example, he met the eminent poet René Char, whom he admired enormously, not

only for his poetry but also for his work with the French resistance in World War II (in 1958 Celan translated Char's diaries from the resistance into German).[3] Like other leading intellectual and cultural figures, Char was an enthusiastic Heideggerian, a fact that did not escape the younger man in their discussions. He, too, echoed the prevailing ideas about the thinker that excluded biographical facts and saw him as a resistance figure. Given these circumstances, it is understandable why Pöggeler claims that during these early years, at least, Celan was a 100 percent Heideggerian.[4] Yet doubts began to arise, and Löwith's book, which was not available in French, might have been one of the catalysts that caused him to reconsider his German vis-à-vis and delve into his Nazi past.

After finishing his reading of *What Is Called Thinking* in October 1954, twenty months would pass before Celan again read a work by the thinker in June 1956. This raises questions about why his enthusiasm apparently waned during this time and why his relationship to the once-admired thinker became more troubled and problematic. While the available information is fragmentary, and sometimes contradictory, at least three biographical factors from this period seem to have played a role.

Nazism and Anti-Semitism in Postwar Germany

The first factor was Celan's obsession with writers and other cultural figures in contemporary Germany who had a Nazi past. To assist with his translations, in his early years in Paris he sometimes did research in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Beginning in the late 1950s or early 1960s, he also went there to track down information about the Nazi affiliation of leading figures on the West German cultural scene, to learn which practicing contemporary writers and critics (sometimes counter to their own claims) had published under the Nazis, and to read publications from the Third Reich.[5] His sensitivity toward these former Nazis or Nazi sympathizers was so strong that in the course of the 1950s it was not unusual for him to refuse to allow his poems to be published in proposed anthologies that included writers whose Nazi past was known to him or to break off dealings with publishers who employed former Nazis. In the course of his research he undoubtedly learned more than he had previously known about Heidegger's activities under the Nazis, and almost certainly he found and read a copy of the thinker's 1933 inaugural lecture as rector of the University of Freiburg. Christoph Schwerin, a German student who worked six months as a part-time secretary for Celan, claims that when they first met in May 1955, Celan already knew a good deal about the thinker's Nazi past. According to Schwerin, the poet

was fascinated by Heidegger's writings, but his ambivalence toward Heidegger's person was pronounced and contributed to his desire to avoid meeting with the German philosopher for many years.[6] Nowhere does Celan make any written statement that reveals his feelings about Heidegger's activities in the Third Reich, but it is equally clear that he was beginning to see him as an outright, unregenerate Nazi.

A second, indirect factor in his change of attitude toward Heidegger was the paralyzing effect the so-called Goll Affair was beginning to have on him. In Paris late in 1949 Celan became acquainted with the bilingual (French/German) expressionist poet Yvan Goll, who was dying of leukemia. Goll liked the younger poet and asked him, under the direction of his wife, Claire, to translate some of his late poems from French into German, which Celan did after Goll's death in February 1950. Based on these translations, Claire Goll, in August 1953, began a defamation campaign against Celan, accusing him of having plagiarized her late husband's poetry. News of these accusations, which she made in open letters to publishers, radio stations, and newspaper editors in Germany, soon reached him. By 1956 the claims had become so widespread that one critic publicly named him a "master plagiarist."[7] Shortly before Goll's death Celan had arranged to have his friend Klaus Demus, who had a matching blood type, donate blood to the dying man. After his solicitude for the poet, and after having invested so much in translating Goll's poems, he now felt betrayed. Hypersensitive as he was, the flood of accusations, claims, and counterclaims in which he found himself immersed over the next seven years severely destabilized him mentally and stirred up his already deeply suspicious nature. By his own account, these accusations debilitated him for almost a year, for in July 1956 he wrote to a friend that "for months, indeed for an entire year, I have barely been able to put down a line on paper" (Ich habe seit Monaten, ja seit einem Jahr kaum eine richtige Zeile zu Papier gebracht).[8] Although he was exonerated in the early 1960s, the psychic burden of dealing with these accusations over an extended period magnified his growing suspicion toward the German cultural establishment from the mid-1950s on and contributed, more than any other single factor, to a severe mental breakdown in the early 1960s.

A third personal consideration that developed in the course of the Goll affair was his awareness of flourishing anti-Semitism in contemporary West Germany and his perception that, spoken or unspoken, he was being targeted because its promoters wished to ignore or forget the Holocaust and destroy anyone who tried to keep its memory alive. He saw a close link between these activities and Claire Goll's accusations of plagiarism. In a letter of July 30, 1960, to his friend Alfred

Margul-Sperber in Bucharest, he refers to the "Neo-Nazi intrigues" in West Germany: "In an obvious connection to these machinations, an attempt has been underway for some time to destroy me and my poems" (Im deutlichen Zusammenhang mit diesen Umtrieben erfolgt nun auch seit längerem der Versuch, mich und meine Gedichte zu zerstören).[9] Although the connection between recrudescent Nazism and Claire Goll's accusations was magnified by his deteriorating mental stability, his perceptions about anti-Semitism in Germany were not unfounded, and they affected his behavior. In his first years in Paris, it seems he downplayed his Jewish identity and tried to keep it private. Marrying a Catholic woman from a French noble family helped, and according to Rino Sanders, who became acquainted with him in 1950, in his first years in Paris he seldom spoke about his past and rarely identified himself to friends or acquaintances as a Jew.[10] But as early as May 1952, while reading his poetry at the Group 47 meeting in Niendorf, Germany, he heard remarks directed at his person that he construed as anti-Semitic. The organizer of the conference wrote (and later retracted) the statement that Celan's style of reading his poems reminded the author of the "sing-song" of the cantor in a synagogue.[11] According to Celan another writer at the conference told him that he disliked both his poems and the pathos with which Celan read them, since they reminded him of Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister.[12] Celan took this to be a particularly vicious attack on his Jewishness. Both remarks fueled his suspicions that anti-Semitism was alive and well among postwar Germans and that he was regarded primarily as a Jewish writer.

In another example of his sensitivity about real or perceived anti-Semitism in Germany, he reacted negatively in January 1955 to a recent book on German poetry entitled *Geist und Ursprung,* by Curt Hohoff, which included an essay that dealt with some of Celan's poems. The sore point was not only that Hohoff had accepted Claire Goll's accusations by claiming that her husband had "influenced" the younger poet but that he compared Celan's not easily intelligible poetry with obscure passages from the Mishna: "Philology breaks apart on such poems [by Celan] just as it does on those passages in the Mishna where scholarship resigns."[13] Celan took this negative comparison as another anti-Semitic statement directed at him.

A personal encounter in 1956 further reinforced his conviction about latent anti-Semitism among most Germans. At a conference for French and German writers from April 28 to May 2 at Vézelay, France, he heard a German writer in a private conversation say, "I can't stand to smell Jews," a remark that triggered protests from German friends there whom Celan considered decent (Heinrich

Böll, Rolf Schroers) but that again confirmed his deepest suspicions.[14] Friends in Paris also had observed his extreme reactions to any mention of the death camps or of the Holocaust generally.[15] Shortly after he finished reading Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics,* he moved from personal experience and hearsay knowledge into a more intense, systematic study of the Nazi past than he had done until this point.

In November 1954, at a time when Germany was no more enthusiastic about dealing with its Nazi past than France was about its own, and when accurate scholarship or even general information on the Holocaust was still limited, the Comité d'Histoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale in Paris mounted an exhibit in the Institut Pédagogique National titled the "History of the Resistance, the Deportation, and the Liberation of France," which examined France's recent past under Nazi rule. Celan is thought to have seen this exhibit, which received widespread attention in the French press.[16] Out of it grew the idea for the first major documentary film on the Holocaust, *Night and Fog,* which Alain Resnais agreed to direct.

Resnais asked Jean Cayrol, himself a survivor of the concentration camp Mauthausen, to write the script. At the time (spring 1955), Celan, who had met Cayrol the previous year,[17] was translating or had just completed translating Cayrol's novel *L'espace d'une nuit.* Either in 1955 or early 1956 Cayrol then asked the poet to render a German translation of his text for the film.[18] This caused Celan to plunge into further research on the Holocaust. From the liberties he took with Cayrol's text,[19] it is apparent not only that he read widely on the topic at this time[20] but also that his intense feelings about it caused him to make the text and its representation of the Holocaust into a highly personal cause, one that would occupy him until the end of his life. A scandal surrounding the documentary also confirmed his suspicions about the prevalence of Nazi attitudes in West Germany. Based on the released French version, and before Celan began his German version of the text, the German ambassador in Paris succeeded in having it removed from the film competition at Cannes on the grounds that it would have "unpleasant consequences for Germans."[21] Though the chorus of protests that followed prompted a debate in the German parliament and a decision to approve a subsidy for its translation, Celan saw in this incident a validation of his views about ex-Nazis in the highest circles in Germany.

In 1953 one of the earliest scholarly studies on the Holocaust, Gerald Reitlinger's *The Final Solution: Hitler's Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe,* was published in London. With a few exceptions, carefully documented original

treatises of this type on the Holocaust would not appear in Germany or France until years later, but Celan acquired a 1956 German translation of it that same year, read it, and even borrowed an image and one line from it for his poem "Tenebrae."[22] His involvement with material about the Holocaust was also obvious to Günter Grass, who became acquainted with the poet after moving to Paris in 1956. Grass claimed that he was indebted to Celan "for the knowledge that Auschwitz has no end."[23] By this time the poet was speaking extensively and openly about it.

His preoccupation with Nazi Germany and the Holocaust undoubtedly affected Celan's shift in attitude toward Heidegger, though he left no record of it in currently known documents. Up to this point in 1956 his readings of the philosopher's works had given no hint of anti-Semitism in the philosopher's thinking, and the poet had no grounds to suspect him of that. But Heidegger's works also had offered no explanation or apology for his well-known affiliation with Nazism, and Celan could not reconcile this evasive silence with his admiration for the philosopher's thinking. In light of these growing doubts, which gnawed at him for the next decade before he actually met Heidegger, it seems odd that he would turn again to the German thinker. But return he did to an imaginary dialogue that took on new dimensions, though it also left a number of unanswered questions.

Celan Reads *On the Question of Being*

As his contribution to a festschrift honoring the German writer Ernst Jünger on his sixtieth birthday, Heidegger in 1955 wrote a long essay (he called it a "letter") entitled "Über 'die Linie'" ("About 'The Line'"). In 1956 he published it as a forty-four-page pamphlet under the title *On the Question of Being (Zur Seinsfrage)*, which Celan bought and read. It is difficult to say what motivated him after twenty months of no dialogue to resume his reading of Heidegger with this specific work, but the philosopher seems to have exerted an irresistible pull on him. At any rate Celan bought and read *On the Question of Being* soon after it appeared (he gives June 5, 1956, as the date he completed it).

Judging by the limited number of markings and complete lack of notations, this treatise does not seem to have resonated as strongly with him as some of the works he read earlier. But he was intrigued by certain language innovations—the word *Ge-stell* (the framing), for example, which he marked (*G* 9:401) without indicating if he understood it, or the use of the crossed-through word *Being*

that Heidegger introduced here (*G* 9:411), an essentially poetic creation by which the thinker attempted to express a new concept that he felt could not be articulated through conventional signification. As in earlier readings, Heidegger's unique language creations continued to fascinate him.

Other textual markings highlight two familiar topics that preoccupied him—the thinker's reflections on primordial language and his thoughts on forgetting. A paragraph in which Heidegger asserts three times that primordial language is by nature ambiguous elicited a mark in the margin from the poet, who consciously or unconsciously had illustrated that very observation in his own work and would repeat it in his "Meridian" speech. Furthermore, according to the thinker, this "multivalence of the Saying" (die Mehrdeutigkeit der Sage, *G* 9:423) that occurred in all primordial language, whether philosophical or poetic, made poetic speech equal to the language of primordial thinking, a concept that would have supported Celan's views of his role as a poet: "This Saying is not an expression of thinking, but [thinking] itself, its motion and song" (Diese Sage ist nicht der Ausdruck des Denkens, sondern es selber, sein Gang und Sang, *G* 9:424).

Passages dealing with forgetfulness and memory also appealed to him strongly. According to one he marked, forgetfulness is not only bound up with Being but controls it: "Meanwhile forgetfulness, which appears to be something separate from it, not only *seizes hold* of the essence of Being. It belongs to the matter of Being itself, holds sway as the destiny of its essence" (Indessen *befällt* die Vergessenheit als anscheinend von ihm Getrenntes nicht nur das Wesen des Seins. Sie gehört zur Sache des Seins selbst, waltet als Geschick seines Wesens, *G* 9:415). Whether the poet accurately grasped Heidegger's total meaning in this passage or others is immaterial. For him the immediate sense was more than enough. His own concept of forgetfulness had a specific point of contemporary reference—the forgetfulness that he saw working overtime in post–World War II Germany to obliterate memories of the Third Reich and the Jews exterminated in the Final Solution. Heidegger's observation that forgetting is all-pervasive in Being not only resonated with him; it could only have intensified his desire to cultivate memory in his poetry in order to recover from oblivion the voices lost in "that which happened."

In the same passage he also marked Heidegger's use of the Greek *aletheia* or "unconcealedness" (Unverborgenheit, *G* 9:416). Though he first encountered the term in *Being and Time* several years earlier, it probably began to make more sense to him in the context of forgetting and remembering. He read how "thoughtful remembrance" (Andenken) brings into unconcealment that which, through forgetfulness, has become concealed or lost from memory:

> Unconcealment lies in the concealment of the presencing. Thoughtful remembrance is directed toward *this* concealment, which is grounded in unconcealment (aletheia). It remembers thoughtfully that past entity that has not perished, because it remains the imperishable in all that endures, all that ever allowed the appropriation of Being.
>
> [Die Unverborgenheit beruht in der Verborgenheit des Anwesens. *Dieser* Verborgenheit, in der die Unverborgenheit (aletheia) gründet, gilt das Andenken. Es denkt jenes *Gewesende* an (italics mine), das nicht vergangen ist, weil es das Unvergängliche in allem Währen bleibt, das je das Ereignis des Seins (x) gewährt.] (*G* 9:416).

Though he seems to have accepted the general thrust of Heidegger's argument, he made the connection between "unconcealment" and the immediate Nazi past much more specific by a small but significant editorial change that suggests he was reading very attentively. Focusing on the Heideggerian coinage *Gewesende,* he crossed out the letter *d* in the text and entered in the margin a proofreader's notation to delete it. In so doing, he transformed an untranslatable word meaning roughly "past beings or entities" (das Gewesende) into "what was [in the] past" (das Gewesene). The revised term is almost surely a variation on similar circumlocutions Celan employed that referred obliquely to the events of the Third Reich generally as "that which was"[24] or "that which happened" (das, was geschah, *GW* 3:186). For him, memory and the past centered on specific events, among them the death of his parents, and a specific historical time, and he emended Heidegger's text to conform to this view.

First Contact between Celan and Heidegger

Within a few weeks of finishing this treatise, the poet must have acted on the desire he expressed nearly two years earlier in a letter to the philosopher that he drafted in his notebook while reading *What Is Called Thinking*. Now for the first time it appears he got in touch with Heidegger directly. What motivated him is unclear, though the renewed contact with the thinker's ideas while reading *On the Question of Being* easily could have rekindled his desire to enter a new phase in the private dialogue he had been carrying on for several years.

Prima facie evidence that he initiated the contact comes not from the poet but from Heidegger himself. In an envelope postmarked September 20, 1956, he sent Celan a copy of his latest work—a talk given at the Hebel Society entitled "Conversation with Hebel alongside his 'Schatzkästlein' at the Hebel-Day, 1956"

("Gespräch mit Hebel beim 'Schatzkästlein' zum Hebeltag 1956," *G* 16:534). While its sympathetic discussion of the regional poet Johann Peter Hebel and his publication of an eighteenth-century "calendar" did not solicit any visible markings by Celan, its importance is the gesture Heidegger made in giving it. It is highly unlikely that the prominent thinker would have sent an unsolicited gift like this with a handwritten dedication to a poet whom he had never met and did not know. His personal inscription in the front further makes it clear that he was thanking the poet for something he recently had received from him. It reads: "For Paul Celan / with cordial thanks and greetings" (Für Paul Celan / mit herzlichem Dank und Gruß). Again it is not known if the poet sent a brief note, a longer letter, a copy of one or both volumes of his published poems, or a combination of these. If a note or letter was included with the pamphlet Heidegger sent, it, like all correspondence between the two from 1956 until 1970 (with the exception of two letters), is missing. It is tempting to think that Celan sent at least one volume of his poems, since Heidegger's expression of thanks was not a letter but a printed version of his own thought in return for a printed work by the poet. If so, those poems might have introduced him to the younger poet's works. When Otto Pöggeler first met Heidegger in 1959 and spoke with him about Celan, the thinker claimed he already knew the poet's work.[25] This knowledge could well have dated back to something Celan sent him in 1956.

Pöggeler adds another piece of circumstantial evidence for contact that began in 1956. A German postdoctoral student studying and doing research in Paris, he first met Celan there in the spring of 1957. When the poet asked him for names of those in Germany who might be receptive to his poems, Pöggeler mentioned Ludwig von Ficker and Heidegger. This answer amazed the poet and, according to Pöggeler, "confirmed his hopes."[26] Was Celan alluding to the hopes that had been raised after he sent the thinker his unsolicited letter or poems in 1956 and received the answer he did? He also announced to a surprised Pöggeler that he wanted to send the thinker his poem "Streak" ("Schliere," *GW* 1:159), which suggests further that he had established some kind of contact before 1957. If Heidegger had understood this obscure poem, it could easily have been seen as a provocation, for the "streak" in the eye referred to in the title is one caused by a wound to the eye, thereby permanently altering the way one sees the world. This was the last thing the normally courteous, punctilious Celan would have sent to a complete stranger. It seems more likely that he intended this particular poem for Heidegger precisely because he hoped to sensitize someone with whom he had already established contact to the wounds and suffering of Holocaust victims and survivors. In short, it would have been another statement in a dialogue that had already begun.

Another year would elapse before Celan again read Heidegger. During that time his conflicted feelings toward the philosopher not only did not abate, but, if anything, they became stronger because of the emotional torment he was suffering. Thus it is surprising that in May 1957 he began reading *The Principle of Reason (Der Satz vom Grund)*. Again it seems that the magnet of intellectual curiosity, or a sense of kinship with the thinking of this former Nazi who articulated or validated what he had long sensed about poetry, exerted a stronger pull than did his reservations and antipathy toward that thinker's tainted past.

More Appropriations from Heidegger

The Principle of Reason, *1957*

In Celan's copy of *The Principle of Reason* almost all of the swirls, *x*'s, and other exuberant markings from earlier readings have given way to more subdued single or double marginal lines, interspersed with an occasional check mark, underline, or marginal notation. And although there are markings on only thirty-one of 211 pages, they begin early and extend to the end, revealing that Celan read the entire work with customary thoroughness. These markings, most of which occur in the last seven of the fourteen lectures in this work, address only peripherally Heidegger's basic argument of how traditional philosophy seeks a ground or reason for things and how this notion of grounding must be rethought. Instead, the passages that caught Celan's attention focus on the thinker's observations about language generally, on the specific relationship between language and thinking, and on his original, sometimes idiosyncratic, manner of manipulating and reinventing the German language.

Since Heidegger repeats himself constantly in his later works, much of what the poet encountered and marked was at least somewhat familiar to him from earlier readings in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *Wrong Paths*, *What Is Called Thinking*, and *Explications of Hölderlin's Poetry*. His new markings next to familiar concepts suggest that as he reread them, they either began to resonate more completely than they had earlier, or they reaffirmed his earlier approval.

In *Being and Time* he had marked passages about "hearing naturally," the connection between hearing and speech, and the relationship between speech and silence (*G* 2:216–219). In *The Principle of Reason* a passage that he marked with a single line expands on an earlier idea "that thinking is hearing and saying" (dass das Denken ein Hören und ein Sehen ist, *G* 10:70). A bit later he entered a mark in the margin next to a passage where Heidegger articulates the connection between the thinker's hearing and what traditionally cannot be

heard, that is, "that which is silence(d)" (das Verschwiegene) and "the soundless" (das Lautlose, *G* 10:75). To "hear" silence or the soundless, Heidegger claims, requires a capacity that everyone possesses but that no one uses properly (*G* 10:75)—no one except the thinker and the poet, for at this point in his thinking, what Heidegger said about the thinker usually applied to the poet.

In several passages, one of which Celan marked (*G* 10:145–146), the thinker again discusses the double meaning of *übersetzen* as the basis of philosophical and poetic language. In one part of this discussion that caught the poet's attention, Heidegger also argues that thinking, which he describes as the translation or transferal of sensible hearing and seeing into a nonsensible realm of perception, is different from normal hearing and seeing with the senses: "If we take thinking to be a sort of hearing and seeing, then sensible hearing and seeing is taken over and transported into the realm of nonsensible perception, viz. of thinking. In Greek such transporting is called metapherein" (Fassen wir das Denken als eine Art Hören und Sehen, dann wird das sinnliche Hören und Sehen übernommen und hinübergenommen in den Bereich des nicht-sinnlichen Vernehmens, d.h. des Denkens. Solches Hinübertragen heißt griechisch metapherein, *G* 10:70). He maintains that because traditional metaphysics is not able to make an adequate distinction between these two modes of seeing and hearing, the conventional view of "metaphysics" and the concept "metaphor," which attempts to describe this transferal and is by definition embedded in metaphysics, are invalid (*G* 10:71–72). This notion of a special kind of seeing and hearing as the basis for the activity of thinkers and poets, one that defies conventional categories such as "metaphor," clearly struck a responsive note with Celan. Later evidence will show how he had already moved away from the accepted view of metaphor and within a short time would formulate his own original views on the nature of poetic language.

The poet also reacted with a mark in the margin to Heidegger's admission about "the clumsier and more tentative language of the treatise *Being and Time*" (der noch unbeholfeneren und vorläufigeren Sprache der Abhandlung "Sein und Zeit," *G* 10:128). Was he perhaps thinking that the language of his own earlier poems, too, might have been awkward and tentative relative to his present understanding of poetic diction? And he marked approvingly a passage in which Heidegger excoriated the growing tendency of the rapidly emerging information age to use language only as an instrument for communication (*G* 10:182), a theme on which Celan would elaborate as he prepared his "Meridian" speech.

The "Site" of Poetry and the Term *Entsprechen*

Celan was also intrigued by two creative wordplays that he had read in other works but whose significance probably had not registered in his earlier encounters with Heidegger. Now they struck him forcefully enough to cause him to take note of and elaborate on them three years later in his "Meridian" speech. The first plays on the German noun *Ort* (place or site) and the verb *erörtern,* which is derived from the same root as *Ort* but has the meaning of discussing in detail, arguing, or elaborating on something. Speaking of the "site of the principle of reason" (der Ort des Satzes vom Grund), Heidegger asserts that one can designate the way leading to this "site" as "a discussion of the principle of reason": "This, from whence the claim of the principle speaks, we call the site of the principle of reason. The way that should lead to this site and first explore this site we call the elaboration of the principle of reason" (Dies, von woher der Anspruch des Satzes spricht, nennen wir den Ort des Satzes vom Grund. Den Weg, der zu diesem Ort führen und den Ort allererst erkunden soll, nennen wir die Erörterung des Satzes vom Grund, *G* 10:87–88). More will be said about these words in the discussion of Celan's "Meridian" speech, where he picked up and modified Heidegger's terms slightly while discussing his own views on the "site of poetry" (Ort der Dichtung, *GW* 3:193–195).

The second wordplay to which Celan reacted here, and which he repeated in the "Meridian" speech, also involves a term he already had read in other works by Heidegger. It is the thinker's unique use of the German verb *entsprechen,* which in standard usage means "to correspond, conform, or be suitable" to something or someone. In a long passage marked by the poet, Heidegger gives the word a new sense by playing on its root word *sprechen* (to speak) and by elucidating a concept of poetry that Celan found highly congenial. Understanding this parallel in thinking about poetic language requires a brief detour through some passages in his 1948 prose piece "Edgar Jené and the Dream of a Dream."

There Celan used distinctly Heideggerian concepts that also play a prominent role in *The Principle of Reason:* seeing and hearing. In the poet's early work the color of these new "forms" (Gestalten) "speaks to a new pair of eyes" the speaker has acquired (ihre Farbe redet zu einem neuen Augenpaar), and "my hearing wanders over into my touch, where it learns to see" (mein Gehör ist hinübergewandert in mein Getast, wo es sehen lernt, *GW* 3:158). He then links this evocation of a special mode of seeing and hearing to the poet's unique receptivity to and activity as mediator of a primordial, unspoken language that, as he would later put it,

is *in statu nascendi*. This, however, does not occur through the poet's own autonomous cognitive or creative ability. Instead, the passage describes how "words and forms may come" to the poet ("Aus den entferntesten Bezirken des Geistes mögen Wort und Gestalten kommen," *GW* 3:157), suggesting that the poet is the recipient of these primeval language impulses rather than an original creator.

While reading *What Is Called Thinking* in 1954, Celan made two marginal marks next to a formulation by Heidegger that seemed to reinforce this view with its claim that we do not play with language but are instead recipients of language: "If one may speak here of playing games at all, it is not we who play with words, but the essence of language plays with us" (Wenn hier schon von einem Spiel die Rede sein darf, dann spielen nicht wir mit den Wörtern, sondern das Wesen der Sprache spielt mit uns, *G* 8:122). Apparently this concept validated his own emerging views. And Heidegger's notion later in the text that "language speaks, not humans" (Die Sprache spricht, nicht der Mensch, *G* 10:143) also seems to echo what Celan was trying to formulate in his prose piece. Behind Heidegger's claim lies the idea of language as the house of Being, a real but unuttered entity that is equiprimordial with Being, something like a silent protective presence that surrounds and shelters each being and speaks to thinkers and poets who are capable of hearing and bringing it into spoken language.

In this context Heidegger's term *entsprechen* assumes special meaning. In a passage he had marked when reading *Wrong Paths* three years earlier, Celan learned how a thinker has a special "correspondence" to thinking just as a cabinetmaker does to the wood he is working, which creates the "co-respondence" that allows both to "respond" to their material. But here and elsewhere Heidegger endows the word with a double meaning. It still designates an act of correspondence in the traditional sense, where a poet aligns his sensibilities to language. But the prefix *ent-* negates a root word that refers to speaking, thereby denoting a suppression of conventional language in favor of the thinker's or poet's opening himself to primordial language. This second usage in Heidegger could be translated to mean that thinkers or poets "de-speak" or "dis-speak" language by allowing primordial language to speak to or through them rather than by attempting original creation with it through their own imaginative powers. This voluntary stance of not-speaking, which some translators of Heidegger have rendered as "renunciation," presupposes the desire and ability to listen to primordial language, for it is only through this conscious "de-speaking" that the poet can open him- or herself to this originary language of Being: "Humans only speak inasmuch as they respond to [entsprechen] language on the basis of *Geschick* [Heidegger's specialized term for destiny]" (Der Mensch spricht nur, indem er

geschicklich der Sprache entspricht, *G* 10:143). Using one of his favorite images for thinkers and poets who have unusual access to the lighted forest clearing ("Lichtung") in which the authentic, primordial language of Being manifests itself or comes into unconcealment, Heidegger then asserts, "This de-speaking/co-responding is the genuine manner in which humans belong in the clearing of Being" (Dieses Entsprechen aber ist die eigentliche Weise, nach der der Mensch in die Lichtung des Seins gehört," *G* 10:143). More will be said on the term *entsprechen* in later chapters, especially the one on Celan's "Meridian" speech, where he again cites it in reference to Heidegger.

Revealing and Concealing: The "Speaking-to-Us" of Language

An extension of this idea in the same passage of *The Principle of Reason* opened other insights for the poet as he accepted the thinker's views and transformed them into a fundamental part of his own poetic theory. Heidegger asserts that words do not have multiple meanings simply because people speaking and writing in different ages meant different things with them. Instead, as he suggests here and elsewhere, multivalence arises because primordial language in its very essence has multiple meanings. Thus humans are "addressed" differently by primordial language according to their relationship to Being: "The multiplicity of meanings . . . arises from the fact that in the speaking of language we ourselves are at times meant, i.e. addressed, differently according to the destiny of the Being of beings" (Die Mannigfaltigkeit der Bedeutungen . . . entspringt daraus, dass wir selbst im Sprechen der Sprache je nach dem Seinsgeschick vom Sein des Seienden jeweils anders gemeint, d.h. angesprochen sind, *G* 10:143). Here again the notion of being "addressed" by language that "speaks" to or through each person individually introduced Celan to a topic that soon permeated his thinking about poetry.

In almost everything by Heidegger he had read to this point, Celan repeatedly had come across the terms *reveal* (entbergen) and *conceal* (verbergen), their noun derivatives, and related terms from the same semantic field, all of which Heidegger again used in this work. Here, however, they seem to have registered more forcefully. The thinker's notion of these symbiotic activities mirrored in part a view of poetry that Celan held before ever reading Heidegger. Since he recognized early that poetry both reveals and conceals, he sometimes revised his own poems to disguise or conceal references that he felt were too obvious or that revealed too much of himself. In fact, Ilana Shmueli cites his repeated claim to her that "poems are so explicit" (Gedichte sind so explizit).[1] His practice of in-

tentionally concealing as he rewrote his poems can be observed by consulting the historical-critical edition of his poems and its detailed account of the genesis of many poems.[2] Baumann claims this basic tactic of revealing and concealing even extended to his habits of speech: "In numerous statements he conveyed clarifying knowledge, at the same time concealing who he was. His artistry lay in expressing himself at the same time he withheld himself."[3]

Both in his poetry and his personal life he understood and employed the art of using words for their ability simultaneously to reveal and conceal, mirroring what Tennyson wrote: "For words, like Nature, half reveal / And half conceal the Soul within."[4] As for *The Principle of Reason,* however, Celan reacted specifically to Heidegger's claim, already present but probably overlooked in works he had read earlier, that the nature of Being is to conceal itself at the same time it reveals itself, that revealing cannot occur without concealing, and that the two are in essence one and the same phenomenon. Quoting Heraclitus, Heidegger asks how one can take place without the other: "If this concealing were omitted and dropped, how could revealing occur?" (Fiele diese Verbergung aus und weg, wie sollte dann noch Entbergung geschehen? *G* 10:95). In apparent agreement Celan marked the subsequent sentence: "Today we say: Being proffers itself to us, but in such a way that at the same time, in its essence, it already withdraws" (Wir sagen heute: Sein schickt sich uns zu, aber so, dass es zugleich schon sich in seinem Wesen entzieht, *G* 10:95).

Whether a confirmation or expansion of his own views, the idea that Being simultaneously reveals and conceals itself while addressing, speaking to, or "coming" to a receptive speaker resonated strongly with him, and he returned to it repeatedly. Applied to Celan's poetry, Heidegger's claim might be illustrated with the double meaning produced by hyphenating the English word *re-cover*. In the process of "recovering" language from silence, which might be said to be one of Celan's main concerns, he could not help but "re-cover" it in part. But how did this "re-covering" take place?

A few pages earlier in *The Principle of Reason* he had read formulations that invoked the image of the "clearing" (Lichtung) in the context of connectedness to essential or primordial Being and of something being "spoken to us" or "sent to us" by Being:

> When we speak of the "destiny" of Being, then we mean that Being speaks to us and clears [lights] itself, and in the process of clearing furnishes the temporal play-space wherein beings can appear . . . [T]he essence of history is determined on the basis of the "destiny" of Being, of Being as Geschick, of that which sends itself to

> us as it withdraws. Both—being sent to us and withdrawing—are one and the same, not two different things.
>
> [Wenn wir das Wort "Geschick" vom Sein sagen, dann meinen wir, dass Sein sich uns zuspricht und sich lichtet und lichtend den Zeit-Spiel-Raum einräumt, worin Seiendes erscheinen kann . . . (D)as Wesen von Geschichte (bestimmt sich) aus dem Geschick des Seins, aus dem Sein als Geschick, aus solchem, was sich uns zuschickt, indem es sich entzieht. Beides, Sichzuschicken und Sichentziehen, sind Ein und das Selbe, nicht zweierlei.] (*G* 10:91).

Here and elsewhere Heidegger appears to use both formulations—that Being "speaks to us" (sich uns zuspricht) and "sends itself to us" (sich uns zuschickt)—synonymously. The importance of this and related passages for Celan cannot be overemphasized. It is not too much to say that this idea would become fundamental to his own understanding of how poetry originates.

A later paragraph dealing with this idea produced a revealing marginal notation—the only one Celan made in this book. Heidegger's elaboration here on the concept he calls "the speaking-to-us of Being" (der Zuspruch des Seins, *G* 10:187–188) prompted the poet to write three words in the upper margin of that page: "Conversation and Speaking-to-us" (Gespräch und Zuspruch). Heidegger's text says nothing about a "conversation," but it seems clear that the poet, fascinated by the notion of listening to Being speaking to him, might have viewed this as entering into a conversation with Being. Here Heidegger seems to have supplied the theoretical clarification and articulation of a view, probably already nascent in the poet's thinking, about the essentially dialogic nature of poetry that Celan articulated more explicitly in his "Meridian" speech.

Though the term *conversation* does not occur on this or the subsequent page of Heidegger's text, Celan's notation of the concept of "speaking to us" (Zuspruch) responds directly to Heidegger's explication of this term. In confirming the affinity between this concept and Celan's earlier piece "Edgar Jené and the Dream of the Dream," it solved a fundamental problem for him about the origins of poetry. He first came upon the term *Zuspruch* while reading *The Field Path* in 1951, where the thinker used it in the formulation "the speaking-to-us of the field path" (der Zuspruch des Feldweges, *G* 13:89–90). At the time it seems to have made no impression on him, and he did not mark it. In 1953, while reading *Wrong Paths*, he made a line in the margin next to another passage that used the same term but did not elaborate on it: "It is a misunderstanding of thinking to search for dependencies and influences among thinkers. Every thinker is dependent, viz. on the speaking-to-us of Being" (Nach Abhängigkeiten und Ein-

flüssen zwischen den Denkern zu fahnden ist ein Missverständnis des Denkens. Jeder Denker ist abhängig, nämlich vom Zuspruch des Seins, *G* 5:369). The notion expressed here that thinkers are not dependent on the influence of other thinkers, but on hearing what Being says to them, brought him closer to the ultimate insight he gained from *The Principle of Reason*. This had to do with the question of how poetry arises in the first place.

Celan's unpublished 1954 notebook on *Introduction to Metaphysics* makes it clear that Heidegger's thinking had caused him to struggle for clarity about the notion of "inspiration" and its relationship to creativity. At this time he apparently accepted something called "inspiration" as a force in writing poetry, but as one of his notes makes clear, he rejected the closely related concept of inspiration as a form of illumination and of poets as illuminati: "Poets: in spite of inspiration, not a guild of illuminati" (Die Dichter-trotz Inspiration-keine Illuminatenzunft, *B* 352). He expressed similar skepticism in a letter to Hans Bender on November 18, 1954, about the idea that poetry is a mysterious form of illumination.[5] At this time he was also developing a profound distrust toward the traditional notion of poetry as "art," a topic he would develop more fully in his "Meridian" speech six years later, where it is clear that he viewed "art" in modern poetry as "artifice," meaning it was artificial, contrived, and not genuine or authentic as his poems were.[6] But in rejecting poetry as a form of "illumination" or "art," he was caught in a dilemma, for he also dismissed the notion that poems were simply "made" by experimenting with or crafting words, as the concrete poets in Germany at the time were doing, a poetic movement he disliked intensely for personal and aesthetic reasons.[7] In a 1962 letter to Nina Cassian, for example, he took issue with the notion that poems are in some way "invented" by the poet, claiming that he had never had the ability to do that: "In addition, I have never known how to invent—everything that I have written I have received and vice versa" (D'ailleurs, je n'ai jamais su inventer—j'ai bien reçu ce que j'ai écrit et vice-versa).[8] Heidegger's exposition of the concept of how Being speaks to us apparently helped him find a solution, and he embraced it wholeheartedly. Though he also seems to have affirmed the notion of poetry as a "craft" (Handwerk), crafting for him was separate from the process by which his poems originated, for he believed they "came" to him. The partially, though not wholly, conscious activity of "crafting" took place during the numerous reworkings of his poems for which he was noted. There he refined or extended the poem's natural tendency to reveal and conceal.

Celan's statement about "receiving" his poems recalls a passage that he had already read and marked in 1953. Heidegger had struggled to translate a Greek

word he found in Aximander and in *Wrong Paths* had claimed that the rendering he finally hit upon was "dictated to [his] thinking" (dem Denken diktiert, *G* 5:369). In a letter of September 7, 1967, Celan used the same expression to describe how he came to write the poem "Deathfugue": "I still remember how it was within me when, without stopping, as if receiving dictation, I wrote 'Deathfugue'" (Ich weiß noch, wie es in mir aussah, als ich, ohne auszusetzen, wie unter Diktat, die "Todesfuge" schrieb).[9]

In a similar experience with a translation from another language, Celan, who had recently completed a translation of Valéry's *La jeune Parque,* wrote to Werner Weber on March 26, 1960, about his work on it. On beginning this challenging project, he claimed that he had to wait for language to speak to him before he was able to proceed. In the process he made a statement about his unequivocal indebtedness to Heidegger for both the general concept and the specific term *Zuspruch,* one of the few cases where he specifically acknowledged the thinker as his source. Producing this translation, he claims, involved an "exercise" but not in the common sense: "It was an exercise. They were exercises. It was, if I am allowed to let a word by Martin Heidegger speak, a waiting for the speaking-to-me of language" (Es war ein Exerzitium, es waren Exerzitien, es war, wenn ich ein Wort Martin Heideggers mitsprechen lassen darf, ein Warten auf den Zuspruch der Sprache).[10] According to this citation it is no longer Being that speaks to the poet but language itself that comes to him directly. This, too, was a direct citation from Heidegger. Two years after reading about this idea in *The Principle of Reason* in 1957, Celan found and marked a passage in Heidegger's *Lectures and Essays (Vorträge und Aufsätze)* in 1959 that used the identical phrase he cited in his 1960 letter: "the speaking-to-us of language" (den Zuspruch der Sprache) instead of Heidegger's earlier idea of the speaking-to-us of Being. A 1965 letter to Erich von Kahler that also employed the term *Zuspruch* in describing the source of his poetry expands on this modification by referring obliquely to the source of primordial language from which the poet receives this "speaking-to-us" not as Being but as "the Poetic" (das Dichterische). Referring to Gustav Landauer's idea for a new breed of poet or artist who has been "moved" or "seized" by this way of experiencing language, he claimed that through all the horrors he experienced, Landauer's idea was still alive in his thinking: "It lives, not without contact with the Poetic, not without interrogating and calling it into question, not without all the speaking-to-us from there" (es lebt, nicht ohne Berührung mit dem Dichterischen, nicht ohne dessen Befragung und Infragestellung, nicht ohne allen Zuspruch von daher).[11]

While reading the passage in *Wrong Paths* where Heidegger describes how

the translation of a Greek word was "dictated" to him (*G* 5:369), Celan wrote in the margin the German word *Eingebung* instead of the equally common German synonym *Inspiration*. Apparently this was his current working definition of how poems came to him, for in a letter the following year to Hanne and Hermann Lenz he again used this German word for "inspiration" in describing a visit with them: "I am still a bit tipsy, intoxicated, stupefied from all the encounters and conversations; also from the words that the moment gave me" (Noch bin ich ein wenig trunken, berauscht, benebelt von all den Begegnungen und Gesprächen; von den Worten auch, die der Augenblick mir eingab).[12] Since the root of *eingeben* is derived from the infinitive *geben* (to give), it follows that etymologically and conceptually the "inspiration" given to the poet in the form of language speaking to him might be considered a gift. From Heidegger, who made this point repeatedly in his writings, Celan borrowed this concept to help formulate more satisfactorily just how poems came to him.

The Poem as a Gift

While reading *Wrong Paths* in 1953, Celan had first encountered this concept of the poem as a gift in an exposition on the nature of poetry (Dichtung). There the philosopher describes the essence of poetry as "the establishing of truth" (die Stiftung der Wahrheit, *G* 5:63). One meaning of the term *establishing*, he asserts here, is "giving" (schenken) or a "gift" (Schenkung). In the thinker's discussion of this topic Celan marked one passage in the margin and underlined a second, both of which designate poetry (Dichtung) as a "sketch" that comes to the poet. The first calls poetry "an illuminating sketch" ([ein] lichtender Entwurf, *G* 5:60), the second a "poetizing sketch" (der dichtende Entwurf, *G* 5:64). And on a page in *The Principle of Reason* where he made marginal markings, though not next to this sentence, he encountered the phrase "the sketch of Being" (der Entwurf des Seins, *G* 10:128). It seems likely that Celan was drawing on memories of these sources when he used the term *sketch* in his "Meridian" speech of 1960 as a designation for his own poems, which he called "sketches of Dasein" (Daseinsentwürfe, *GW* 3:201). In *Wrong Paths* Heidegger elaborates on this "sketch" that comes to the poet as a gift by insisting that it is not derivative or based on something already there: "The poetic sketch derives from nothingness in the sense that it never takes its gift from the familiar or the hitherto existing" (Der dichtende Entwurf kommt aus dem Nichts in der Hinsicht, dass er sein Geschenk nie aus dem Geläufigen und Bisherigen nimmt, *G* 5:64).

An encounter with the same idea a few months later while reading Heideg-

ger's *Explications of Hölderlin's Poetry* prompted the poet to make double lines in the margins next to a related statement about the poem as a gift: "At bottom Dasein is 'poetic'—at the same time this means that as something created (established) it is not an accomplishment, but a gift" ("Dichterisch" ist das Dasein in seinem Grunde—das sagt zugleich: es ist als gestiftetes [gegründetes] kein Verdienst, sondern ein Geschenk, *G* 4:42). In two additional passages in the same work Heidegger repeats this concept of poems as "gifts" to Hölderlin. Celan marked both of them, and both use the more formal verb *bescheiden,* meaning to allot or grant something to someone: "The poet does not invent what is peculiar to his poem. It is granted to him. He submits himself and follows the calling" (Das Eigene seines Gedichtes hat der Dichter sich nicht erdacht. Es ist ihm beschieden. Er fügt sich und folgt der Berufung, *G* 4:183). And "Were we able to interpret this text properly, it would offer assistance in experiencing the peculiarity of the poem that was granted Hölderlin to write" (Vermöchten wir diesen Text gut zu deuten, er böte uns Hilfe, um das Eigentümliche des Gedichts zu erfahren, das zu dichten Hölderlin beschieden ist, *G* 4:185).

Two statements by Celan in 1960 demonstrate how completely he had by then assimilated Heidegger's concept of the poem as a gift that language speaks to or gives the poet. In the same letter to Werner Weber of March 26, 1960, where he cited Heidegger's statement about "waiting for the speaking-to-me of language," he acknowledged that "poems are gifts" (Gedichte sind Geschenke) and went on to say of his translation of Valéry's *La jeune Parque* that even two years after he first considered translating this work, "it still appears marvelous to me today that this poem came to me" (Mir erscheint es noch heute wunderbar, dass dieses Gedicht zu mir kam). He then repeats his opening assertion: "Yes, poems *are* gifts; gifts—from whose hands?" (Ja, Gedichte *sind* Geschenke; Geschenke—aus wessen Hand?).[13] Though he fails to answer the latter question, in a letter written to Hans Bender a week earlier (March 18, 1960), he makes the same claim but with an important qualifier: "Poems, these are also gifts—gifts to the attentive" (Gedichte, das sind auch Geschenke—Geschenke an die Aufmerksamen, *GW* 3:177–178). Later that same year in his "Meridian" speech he would elaborate on the role of attentiveness in the process of receiving the poems that, through Heidegger's insights, he now recognized and formulated as gifts.

Poetic Language and the Information Age

Toward the end of *The Principle of Reason* Celan marked another passage about language that bespoke Heidegger's technophobia generally and his suspi-

cion specifically of the dawning age of cybernetics. From the poet's writings three years later it becomes clear that he shared his spiritual counterpart's fear that technological thinking was transforming language into little more than an instrument of communication and that poetic language (that is, imaginative language in the broadest sense) was imperiled by this trend. Heidegger writes:

> Accordingly, the representation of human language as an instrument of communication is increasingly gaining the upper hand. For the determination of language as information first of all creates the sufficient reason for the construction of thinking machines and for the building of large mainframe computers.
>
> [Demgemäß gewinnt die Vorstellung von der Sprache des Menschen als einem Instrument der Information in steigendem Maße die Oberhand. Denn die Bestimmung der Sprache als Information verschafft allererst den zureichenden Grund für die Konstruktion der Denkmaschinen und für den Bau der Großrechenanlagen.] (*G* 10:182).

A few pages later Heidegger asserts that during the long historical incubation period of the principle of reason, not only was this speaking-to-us of Being operative, but without it there would have been no thinking in the form of philosophy. He goes on to assert, "But without philosophy there would be no Occidental-European science, no release of atomic energy" (Ohne die Philosophie gäbe es aber auch keine abendländisch-europäische Wissenschaft, keine Freisetzung der Atomenergie, *G* 10:189). But, he insists, the noise of modern life and, by implication, the instrumental use of language that makes us unreceptive to its "hints" (Winke) are drowning out this speaking-to-us of Being. He elaborates on these "hints" of language by stating that thinkers and poets must remain receptive to them: "Hints are hints only as long as thinking follows their direction by reflecting on them" (Winke sind nur Winke, solange das Denken ihrer Weisung folgt, indem es ihr nachsinnt, *G* 10:188). In apparent agreement Celan underlined the passage that follows. It claims that only this kind of endangered poetic thinking makes possible that which is "memorable" or, in an equally valid translation of the ambiguous term *das Denkwürdige*, "worthy of thought": "Thus thinking embarks on a path that leads to that which since time immemorial has shown itself in the tradition of our thinking as memorable/worthy of thought and which simultaneously veils itself" (So gelangt das Denken auf einen Weg, der zu dem führt, was sich in der Überliererung unseres Denkens von alters her als das Denkwürdige zeigt und sich zugleich verschleiert, *G* 10:188).

Heidegger closes with a rhetorical question to which Celan would have tacitly given the same positive answer it implied:

> May we . . . give up what is worthy of thought in favor of the frenzy of exclusively cybernetic thinking and its immense successes? Or are we obliged to find paths upon which thinking is capable of corresponding to what is worthy of thought instead of, enchanted by cybernetic thinking, mindlessly passing over what is worthy of thought?
>
> [Dürfen wir . . . dieses Denkwürdige preisgeben zugunsten der Raserei des ausschließlich rechnenden Denkens und seiner riesenhaften Erfolge? Oder sind wir daran gehalten, Wege zu finden, auf denen das Denken dem Denkwürdigen zu entsprechen vermag, statt, behext durch das rechnende Denken, am Denkwürdigen vorbeizudenken?] (*G* 10:189)

Despite his misgivings about Heidegger's Nazi past, Celan could not resist these ideas about the emerging information age's loss of sensibility for poetic language and thought that originated with a thinker who by now had become a strong intellectually kindred spirit. They resonated with him because he felt his own existence as a poet, as well as poetry in general, threatened with extinction. In Heidegger he found general reinforcement of his conviction that we already live in an age of what, in a letter of 1960, he called "cybernetic lyrics" that were leading into an even more fearful world of "lyric cybernetics."[14] In Heidegger he found an unlikely companion in arms against these alarming trends.

Drawing on and Withdrawing from Heidegger, 1958

A summary of Heidegger-related activities in 1958 illustrates how the ambiguities that characterized Celan's relationship to the thinker were becoming more pronounced. Nothing in Celan's library suggests that he read any previously unknown works by Heidegger that year, but reportedly he reread at least one—*Wrong Paths*—to which his reaction in 1953 had been enthusiastic. In 1958 he also sent to Heidegger the only letter known at this point in what must have been a substantial correspondence. There is also evidence that he appropriated more Heideggerian language and thought in his writings that year. Finally, Heidegger's publisher attempted to initiate more direct contact between the two by meeting with Celan and sending him copies of the thinker's recent writings.

It is also clear that during this same period Celan began to distance himself from Heidegger, or at least to formulate philosophical and conceptual differences, despite the implicit acknowledgment of his debt to the thinker in the diction and concepts he used. An unpleasant anti-Semitic incident that involved Celan directly also might have contributed to his refusal to contribute an essay to a festschrift that was to honor Heidegger on his seventieth birthday, for it exacerbated the poet's already deep suspicions about Germans generally and particularly those with a Nazi past.

Late in 1957 the Librairie Flinker, a French bookshop that published an annual literary almanac, solicited from Celan and other writers and thinkers statements about what they were currently working on. The poet's reply, published in the almanac of January 1958, says nothing directly about his own work but instead outlines fundamental differences he sees between French and German lyric poetry, especially the "grayer" postwar German language that, he implies, eventuated from the events of the recent past. At the end, however, he makes a statement that almost certainly refers to something he had read in Heidegger's

The Principle of Reason just a few months earlier. In Celan's typically ambiguous fashion it acknowledges one of the thinker's ideas but at the same time stakes out a somewhat different position on the matter. In writing about contemporary German language, the poet claims that in spite of its ambiguities, it is still concerned with precision. He then alludes to Heidegger's claim that language speaks to or through the poet rather than poetry coming into existence through an autonomous creator who generates poems through his or her own imaginative powers. While not dismissing Heidegger's idea completely, Celan qualifies this claim with a twist that seems designed to go beyond it: "To be sure, what is at work here is never language itself, simply language, but always an 'I' speaking from the specific angle of inclination of his existence, one who is concerned with contour and orientation" (Freilich ist hier niemals die Sprache selbst, die Sprache schlechthin am Werk, sondern immer nur ein unter dem besonderen Neigungswinkel seiner Existenz sprechendes Ich, dem es um Kontur und Orientierung geht, *GW* 3:167–168).

In carrying to its logical conclusion Heidegger's proposition that language speaks to or through the poet, Celan had come to realize that this view could easily depersonalize the poet as a human being or at least exclude the experience and vantage point of the individual poet that he considered essential to his own poetry. Hence he insists that in contemporary German verse, the voice of a poetic "I" who is seeking meaning and orientation is both audible and indispensable. Whether this statement represents a rejection of Heidegger or a modification of his position is a matter of interpretation, but it signals the beginning of a series of moves over the next three years that characterize Celan's growing attempt to declare his independence from Heidegger's thinking without disavowing it altogether.

Traces of Heidegger in Celan's Bremen Speech

In late January 1958 Celan spent a week in Germany, where he went primarily to receive the prestigious Literature Prize of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen. Christopher Fynsk claims he cannot escape the impression that in the contents of his acceptance speech in Bremen, "Celan has radicalized (or perhaps simply *carried forward*) Heidegger's meditation on language and history" and that the speech contains the poet's views on "here is what must be said about poetry after Heidegger."[1]

Besides Heidegger's role as Celan's point of reference for at least some of the content, the diction in the speech sounds as though it might have come directly from the thinker. The notes on which Celan based this speech have not yet been

published, but apparently he made most of them the day before he delivered it on January 26, 1958, and hence without access to his library.[2] This suggests that he was carrying a large number of individual words, general concepts, and specific technical terms from Heidegger's language in his head and that he drew on them freely. From the obvious Heideggerian words, phrases, and concepts in the speech, the thinker's presence in Celan's language at this point is difficult to deny.

The poet opens with an obvious reference to something he had discovered in Heidegger—the common origins of the words *thinking* and *thanking:* "Thinking and thanking in our language are words from one and the same source. Whoever follows out their meanings enters the semantic field of 'recollect,' 'bear in mind,' 'remembrance,' 'devotion.' Permit me, from this standpoint, to thank you"[3] (Denken und Danken sind in unserer Sprache Worte ein und desselben Ursprungs. Wer ihrem Sinn folgt, begibt sich in den Bedeutungsbereich von: "gedenken," "eingedenkt sein," "Andenken," "Andacht." Erlauben sie mir, Ihnen von hier aus zu danken, *GW* 3:185). Heidegger refers to the common origin of "thinking" and "thanking" in several of the works the poet had read earlier. Celan's most probable source was Heidegger's discussion of the topic in *What Is Called Thinking* (*G* 8:142–147), which he had marked at several points while reading it in 1954. Besides using "thinking" and "thanking" as synonyms, this section of Heidegger's text also discusses three of the four cognate words Celan mentions in his Bremen speech—*recollect* (gedenken), *remembrance* (Andenken), and *devotion* (Andacht). In 1953 he had also found a lengthy discussion of several terms relating to memory, notably *remembrance* (Andenken), when he read Heidegger's disquisition on Hölderlin's poem of the same name in *Explications of Hölderlin's Poetry* (*G* 4:79–151).

After reading *Being and Time* in 1952–1953 the poet repeatedly came across another frequently occurring word in Heidegger that appears in this speech: *Gegend*, meaning "region." In the second paragraph of the speech he initially uses the German word *Landschaft* (landscape) to refer to his childhood home in Czernowitz, but in a subsequent sentence he substitutes the word *Gegend* for it, which seems like a conscious choice of a word that Heidegger uses to signify, among other things, intellectual or spiritual topography or states of mind. In Celan's usage this topography refers to the spiritual region of his youth, "in which humans and books lived" (in der Menschen und Bücher lebten, *GW* 3:185). As he continues with his speech, he produces three variations of another term typical of the way Heidegger made substantives out of adverbs, adjectives, and verbs. In referring to Vienna as a physical and spiritual destination, he casts it as an abstract substantive: "the unreachable," "what was reachable," and "what

was to be reached" (des Unerreichbaren, das Erreichbare, das zu Erreichende, *GW* 3:185).

While reading *Being and Time,* Celan had made a number of marginal notes or markings in section 34 dealing with "Being-There and Discourse. Language." In that section Heidegger made no fundamental distinction between "language" (Sprache) in the broader sense and *Rede,* a term that has no tidy equivalent in English but is generally translated as "speech," "discourse," or "talk."[4] He states, "The existential foundation of language is discourse" (Das existenzial-ontologische Fundament der Sprache ist die Rede, *G* 2:213), and "The way in which discourse gets expressed is language" (Die Hinausgesprochenheit der Rede ist die Sprache, *G* 2:214). It appears, nonetheless, that in his speech Celan borrowed and, in a sovereign way, modified these two vocabulary items from the thinker in order to distinguish one from the other. In describing his earlier years, he juxtaposes his German mother tongue, his "language" (Sprache), with the daily talk and political or literary speech or discourse (Rede) of the Third Reich that had almost destroyed both the German language and him as a poet. This oft-cited passage reads, "It, language, remained unlost, yes, in spite of everything. But it had to pass through its own answerlessness, pass through frightful muting, pass through the thousand darknesses of deathbringing discourse [talk]" (Sie, die Sprache, blieb unverloren, ja, trotz allem. Aber sie musste nun hindurchgehen durch ihre eigenen Antwortlosigkeiten, hindurchgehen durch furchtbares Verstummen, hindurchgehen durch die tausend Finsternisse todbringender Rede, *GW* 3:185–186).

When Celan goes on to say that he writes poems in order to orient himself, to "sketch reality for myself" (um mir Wirklichkeit zu entwerfen), the verb he chooses also echoes Heidegger but this time without modifying his language. It seems clear that Celan is citing a term the thinker used to characterize the origins of poetry in *Wrong Paths.* While reading it in 1953, Celan marked passages in a section of the essay "The Origin of the Work of Art" that use the same verb (entwerfen) in a discussion of the poem as a "sketch" (Entwurf, *G* 5:60–64).

The subsequent paragraph of the Bremen speech begins the first sentence with three more trademark Heideggerian terms: *event, movement,* and *being underway* (Ereignis, Bewegung, Unterwegssein), which Celan lists as the essential elements of his attempt to orient himself by sketching out this personal reality. The word *Ereignis,* according to Heidegger, is " a leit-word in the service of thinking" (ein Leitwort im Dienst des Denkens),[5] and Pöggeler considers it one of the most important concepts in Heidegger's thought.[6] Celan probably did not have in mind the multiple meanings it had in the thinker's work, a complexity reflected in diverse English translations that render it as "event," "appropria-

tion," and "emergence."[7] More likely he used it in the sense he found in *Explications of Hölderlin's Poetry* that speaks of the conversation between poetry and thought as being not only special but "the essential event of language" (das wesentliche Ereignis der Sprache, *G* 4:37). Although he did not mark it in specific works by Heidegger he read, it occurred with such frequency in those writings that he hardly could have overlooked this signature word.

He did, however, read the term *movement* or *motion* (Bewegung) a number of times. Using a slightly varied form in *Being and Time,* Heidegger twice mentions "the movement [or agitation] of what has happened" (die Bewegtheit des Geschehens, *G* 2:514), a formulation with which Celan might have "connected" easily after the events of his own life. In *Wrong Paths* Celan specifically marked a passage that explores the etymology of a "weight" used on a scale (Wage) and connects it with moving something (wägen) and finally bringing something to movement (ins Spiel der Bewegung zu bringen, *G* 5:281). And in *The Principle of Reason* Celan read an explanation of this term familiar to him from other works by Heidegger that elucidates how the term *movement* is not the opposite of *rest* or the cessation of movement but an integral part of rest and that the notion of movement is grounded in *rest* (*G* 10:125–126).

Celan had read the term for "being underway" (Unterwegssein) repeatedly in Heidegger, as a few examples among dozens will illustrate. In 1953 he found it in *Wrong Paths* in a question about the direction of Rilke's poetry and "toward what his song is underway" (woraufzu sein Gesang unterwegs ist, *G* 5:320). A passage in *What Is Called Thinking* turns it into a substantive as Heidegger discusses what is necessary in order to "come into the being-underway" (Um in das Unterwegs zu gelangen, *G* 8:173), a notion his subsequent discussion then links to the second of the three Heideggerian terms cited in his Bremen speech, *movement.* And his treatment of the term in *The Principle of Reason* speaks further of persistence in "being underway" (Dies besagt, das "unterwegs" auszuhalten) and claims that everything we see manifests itself only if we are "underway" (Alles, was es zu erblicken gilt, zeigt sich je nur unterwegs am Weg, *G* 10:88).

Celan's citation of the terms *event, movement,* and *being underway* in his speech suggests that he both grasped and subscribed to Heidegger's thinking about these concepts in his own attempt "to orient myself, to find out where I was and where I was meant to go, . . . to gain direction"[8] (um mich zu orientieren, um zu erkunden, wo ich mich befand und wohin es mit mir wollte . . . [um] Richtung zu gewinnen, *GW* 3:186). But in contrast to the first two concepts, he makes the meaning of "being underway" crucial in his developing poetic theory.

Drawing on the Christian concept of existence as a "status viatoris" (being

underway) rather than a "status comprehensor" (having reached one's destination), Heidegger had used the term to describe the unfulfilled human condition between birth and death. This state leaves open the possibility that being underway can end in nothing or nothingness. But Celan did not accept this idea as it applied to poetry; for him writing poetry did not mean being underway on a lonely path without a hoped-for destination. Modifying Heidegger's meaning, he insists that poetry in its essence is an attempted dialogue with an Other, and that like a message in a bottle, which is sent in the hope that it will reach something (his image of its reaching a "heartland" suggests a human being), poems are underway toward some destination:

> A poem as a manifestation of language, and thus essentially dialogue, can be a message in a bottle, sent out in the—not always hopeful—belief that somewhere and sometime it could wash up on land, on heartland perhaps. Poems in this sense too are underway: they are making toward something.
>
> [Das Gedicht kann, da es ja eine Erscheinungsform der Sprache und damit seinem Wesen nach dialogisch ist, eine Flaschenpost sein, aufgegeben in dem—gewiss nicht immer hoffnungsstarken—Glauben, sie könnte irgendwo und irgendwann an Land gespült werden, an Herzland vielleicht. Gedichte sind auch in dieser Weise unterwegs: sie halten auf etwas zu.] (*GW* 3:186)

In his statement for the Librairie Flinker a few months earlier, he had insisted not only that language itself speaks through the poet but that the voice of an individual "I" is also present in a poem. He repeats this assertion here and argues that the goal of a poem is to connect with another human or an Other in a broader sense. And he posits his notion in conscious contrast to what he apparently sees as Heidegger's view of "being underway," that is, a condition without hope, without a goal, without the prospect of human contact. He would elaborate on his difference with Heidegger in his "Meridian" speech two years later.

Nor is this the only way in which he subtly but decisively takes issue with his vis-à-vis. Another sentence that has escaped general attention is the claim that while the poem seeks to be timeless, it is very much bound by the time and circumstances of its origin: "For a poem is not timeless. Certainly it lays claim to infinity, it seeks to reach through time—through, not above and beyond it" (Denn das Gedicht ist nicht zeitlos. Gewiss, es erhebt einen Unendlichkeitsanspruch, es sucht, durch die Zeit hindurchzugreifen—durch sie hindurch, nicht über sie hinweg, *GW* 3:186). Almost certainly this statement is intended to refute the notion Heidegger found in Hölderlin's poem "Andenken" and repeated at various points throughout his works about the timelessness of great po-

ems. Hölderlin's oft-quoted line reads, "But what endures, the poets have established" (Was bleibet aber, stiften die Dichter). Celan qualifies this view. Despite his acceptance of Heidegger's assertion that language speaks to and through the poet, he believed that the peculiar, individual voice of that human is still heard in the poem and that some of the temporalities of the poet's existence will inevitably be reflected in it. Further, these very time-bound elements—in Celan's case the experience and effects of the Holocaust—prevent a poem from being called timeless, despite its claims to the contrary. Hence, he claims, when the poet inquires after the "sense" of the poem (Sinn), he is also inquiring after the "sense [or direction] of the clock hands" (Uhrzeigersinn), meaning the point in time when the poem arose and the events of the age that conditioned it.

Further traces of Heidegger's diction and thought surface in two other passages. When he speaks of man as being "tentless" (zeltlos), meaning unsheltered, the poet almost certainly is alluding to and taking issue with Heidegger's concept of the house of language that traditionally provided shelter and security to poets. After the Third Reich had almost destroyed the German language for him and others, Heidegger's house of language offered no more shelter or protection to poets who are now exposed "in a sense undreamt of till now" (in diesem bisher ungeahnten Sinne). This reference juxtaposes his present condition with his description at the beginning of his address to being "at home" (zu Hause) in prewar times in a region where "humans and books" lived. Finally, in the last sentence of the speech, when he speaks of one who "goes with his very being to language" (mit seinem Dasein zur Sprache geht, *GW* 3:186), he uses the term *Dasein,* which in 1958 was so closely connected with Heidegger's discourse in the minds of educated listeners in Germany that it almost surely would have been recognizable.

Two years later in his "Meridian" speech, Celan picked up and elaborated on some of these differences between his own thinking about poetry and Heidegger's that he had addressed or alluded to in this Bremen speech. Sometimes they were subtle, in other cases substantial. In neither speech, however, was it immediately evident that Heidegger was his unseen conversation partner to whose thinking he was responding and with whom he was sometimes disagreeing. But Heidegger was present, nevertheless, and perhaps more strongly than any single figure with whom Celan had entered into a dialogue to this point in his life. Without Heidegger, the content of both speeches would have been quite different. Precisely because of this dominant presence, Celan in the Bremen speech began to assert his independence from this figure whose thinking enthralled him. Yet this very process of emphasizing differences, one that would continue until their meeting in 1967, reflects how strong his attraction to Heidegger still was.

Celan Conceals and Reveals: Contradictory Views on Heidegger

In July 1958 the young student Jean (also Johann) Firges, who had been corresponding with Celan since the previous year, visited him in Paris. Although only two slim volumes of the exiled writer's poems had appeared in Germany, this Belgian student, who was enrolled at the University of Cologne, had recognized Celan's importance as a poet and wanted to write a doctoral dissertation on his works. During this visit Celan played his well-known game of concealing while revealing. His evasive answer to a request for more biographical information (Celan said that the only biographical information Firges needed to know was evident from his poems) set the stage for another comment, this time about Heidegger, that was more telling than Celan might have intended. Firges recalls: "I asked him to name a book that could put me on the track of questions and problems with which he was occupied at the moment. He reflected for a moment and then said to my astonishment: 'Read Heidegger's *What Is Called Thinking*,' a copy of which lay open on his desk. Then he changed the subject."[9]

While almost any statement by Celan must be taken with a grain of salt, this one suggests that at the very least, Heidegger continued in some way to occupy his thinking, which was evident in his speech at Bremen six months earlier. And though this copy of *What Is Called Thinking* used by Celan is now missing from his library, Firges's account suggests that for unknown reasons the poet had returned to a work by Heidegger that had met with strong positive response when he first read it in 1954. Clearly something continued to resonate with his thinking, and rereading the philosopher's works was a pattern that would continue until the end of the poet's life. But his unwillingness to talk with Firges about Heidegger, typical of Celan's conflicted attitude at this time, points to another pattern of behavior that he repeated. It appears that with most friends and acquaintances Celan did not speak at all about Heidegger. With a few whom he did, he spoke disparagingly. In private, however, he kept on reading or rereading his works. It is almost as if he were plagued by a guilty conscience because of his ongoing interest in Heidegger yet unable to overcome a fascination that kept drawing him back to someone whose thinking held him in its grip.

A visit in August 1958 from the German publisher Günther Neske also contributed to his conflicted feelings over Heidegger. Neske, who had published some of Heidegger's works in Germany, met Celan in Paris on August 14, 15, and 16 of that year. Specific details of their discussions are vague, but Neske's brief recollection of them, published in 1977, suggests that they talked of Heidegger's

works and of his activities in the Third Reich. On these and later occasions, Neske claims, Celan resisted anything positive the publisher said about Heidegger, since for him "the political remained a sheer insurmountable barrier."[10] This statement confirms the pattern of Celan's denunciation of Heidegger and his Nazi politics to certain friends at the same time he was reading him privately.

When he returned to Germany, Neske sent Celan a copy of Heidegger's most recent work, *Identity and Difference (Identität und Differenz),* which Neske had published late in 1957. In it he wrote a dedication: "Paul Celan in grateful memory of Aug. 14, 15, and 16, 1958 in Paris." From an event the next year, it seems that Neske might have reported his meeting with the poet to Heidegger in an attempt to facilitate direct contact.

An Anti-Semitic Incident and Celan's First Letter to Heidegger

An anti-Semitic incident directed at Celan in November 1958, although not related directly to Heidegger, again called up memories of the Holocaust and perhaps fueled Celan's indignation toward the thinker, who was one of the most visible symbols of the living Nazi past in West Germany. On November 17, 1958, Celan gave a reading of his poems at the University of Bonn. Soon after he read the poem "Stretto" ("Engführung"), a student circulated a hastily drawn anti-Semitic cartoon of a slave in chains with a text that paraphrased and parodied a line from that poem. Drawing on two occurrences of the word *Hosanna* in the poem, and a further reference to "temples," the text beneath the crude cartoon read: "Hosanna to the son of David," an obvious allusion to the poet's Jewishness.[11] Firges, who was present at the reading, reported it soon after in a letter to Celan. By his account an outraged Celan demanded to know the name of the perpetrator. Firges, the leader of a foreign-student organization at the university, claims he was uncertain who actually did it, though he suspected one of his fellow students. Because of his uncertainty, however, he refused to divulge the name.[12] Pöggeler claims that Firges, in fact, defended the student cartoonist, whom he knew as a nonconformist, and expressed his regret that Celan had not entered into a conversation with the student.[13] Celan then began to suspect that Firges himself was the caricaturist, and he became convinced of it when he heard that Firges might have been allied with Claire Goll in her plagiarism charges against him. Incensed that the University of Bonn would tolerate such overt anti-Semitism directed at his person, he attempted first to have authorities at the University of Bonn pressure Firges into identifying the instigator. When Firges refused to respond, Celan attempted to have him disciplined by university au-

thorities by denying him the PhD.[14] Neither attempt was successful, but the damage had been done.[15]

Despite this latest confirmation that the Nazi mentality was alive and well in postwar West Germany, a week later he performed one of several incongruous acts in his relationship to Heidegger by sending a letter to this lofty figure who was a real-life reminder to him of "that which happened." Apparently untroubled by the expression of anti-Semitism in Bonn the previous week, on November 24, 1958, Celan sent Heidegger a courteous, formal letter, the first and only one in their correspondence that is known to have survived.

The circumstances that motivated a poet of Celan's Kafka-like emotional complexity to take this long-postponed step may never be known, but on the surface, at least, he did it for a friend. The letter accompanied a copy of Klaus Demus's second volume of poetry (published in 1958) entitled *The Difficult Land (Das schwere Land)*, which he sent to Heidegger unannounced. Celan not only felt personally close to Demus. Because he held his poetry in high regard, he wanted to promote it. Perhaps knowing of Heidegger's interest in younger poets, he also might have used this as an indirect means of resuming contact with the thinker. The letter reads as follows:

> Dear Professor Martin Heidegger!
> Please allow me to send the poems of a friend to
> your house!
> They are the poems of a friend: Since I am letting them go
> this decisive way, I cannot load them with secondary words and
> adjectives. They are the poems of someone who admires you.
>
> In sincere gratitude
> Your
>
> Paul Celan
>
> [Sehr verehrter Herr Professor Martin Heidegger!
> Erlauben Sie mir, bitte, die Gedichte eines Freundes in
> Ihr Haus zu schicken!
> Es sind die Gedichte eines Freundes: ich kann sie, da
> ich sie den entscheidenden Weg gehen lasse, nicht mit Neben- und Beiwort befrachten. Es sind die Gedichte eines Sie Verehrenden.
>
> In aufrichtiger Dankbarkeit
> Ihr
>
> Paul Celan[16]

Almost as if inviting Heidegger to write Demus in response to the volume he had enclosed, at the bottom of the page he included Demus's address in Vienna.

The letter's formal tone gives the impression that even if there had been previous contact between the two, it was limited, for there is no sense that the writer knows the recipient well. But it also fails to reveal anything about the writer himself, even obliquely. Whether out of shyness, profound respect for the internationally known thinker, or deep misgivings, Celan kept everything about his own person concealed. But with this letter he clearly established contact, and although there is no record of answer, an old-school professor with Heidegger's sense of propriety and established pattern of answering almost every letter that came to him doubtless would have acknowledged this gift. It was not until the following year (1959), however, that a documented two-way exchange began in which each revealed that he already knew the other.

Mounting Cognitive Dissonance, Growing Independence, 1959–1960

For Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger a number of firsts marked the year 1959. For the first time each began to inquire of a mutual acquaintance about the other. On Heidegger's part it is the first time he is known to have spoken with others about Celan's poetry. Further, it marks the beginning of contacts between the two through an exchange of inscribed books and letters—almost all of them initiated by Heidegger—that continued for more than a decade.

Meanwhile Celan's fascination with Heidegger's thinking and personal life did not diminish. He read two more works by the thinker. These readings also motivated him to begin formulating his poetic theory in writing. And for the first time he responded to questions about his poetry put to him by Heidegger through an intermediary. But the cognitive dissonance caused by Celan's admiration for Heidegger's works and indignation over his Nazi past also increased dramatically during this time. Celan's indignation was fueled in part by the perceived hostility of ex-Nazi literary critics toward his most recent volume of poems, *Speech-Grille,* which appeared in March 1959, and by outbreaks of violent anti-Semitism in West Germany later in the year.

Although his Bremen speech delivered in January 1958 drew on language and concepts from Heidegger, it expressed no notable hostility toward the thinker, but differences in their views were beginning to emerge. Perhaps conditioned by the anti-Semitic incident in Bonn two months earlier, Celan's frame of mind was different in January 1959, when he attended a devastating anti-Heidegger lecture in Paris by Robert Minder, a professor of German literature at the Sorbonne, that was undisguised in its vilification of the German philosopher. Joseph P. Strelka, a young American Germanist doing research in Paris that year, reports that following the lecture, he was waiting to shake hands with the lecturer. Celan, he states, was just ahead of him in line. Minder introduced them, after which

Strelka and the poet met privately and discussed the lecture. He claims that Celan's reaction to this unmitigated demolition of Heidegger was one of "strong agreement."[1]

Already in 1958 Minder had begun to attack the widespread enthusiasm for Heidegger in Parisian intellectual circles by delivering an earlier version of this lecture at Jean Wahl's Collège philosophique.[2] The published copy, an expanded version of the lecture Celan heard, is a serious but entertaining broadside of vitriol, sarcasm, indignation, ridicule, name calling, nasty anecdotes, oversimplifications, summary judgments, and guilt by association. Drawing primarily on Heidegger's enthusiasm for the Swabian writer Johann Peter Hebel, who, according to Minder's hair-splitting distinction, was not Swabian at all, and Hebel's Swabian dialect stories, Minder excoriates Heidegger for his rootedness in this dialectic/folk tradition, his affinity for the Swabian peasant, and his alleged rejection of the language and the great figures of German literature like Goethe and Schiller. Heidegger's language of the folk, Minder asserts, is the language that gave rise to Nazism and reflects the same mentality: "very simply, his language corresponded to the jargon of the [Nazi] Gauleiters,"[3] he claimed, and "Heidegger subscribed to a language that Goebbels was braying down to the last hours."[4] By upbringing and training, Heidegger, he claims, was a nascent Nazi, and his public speeches during the early years of the Third Reich prove that his overall philosophical project was not only concordant with and supportive of the Nazi ideology but was deeply rooted in it. In this context, he claimed, Heidegger's behavior during the Third Reich was totally explicable but still inexcusable.

In addressing obliquely the thinker's refusal to accept responsibility or apologize for his past, Minder avoids mentioning the Holocaust or Heidegger's attitude toward Jews outright, though they are evident in several unmistakable allusions that Celan would have understood. One allusion is embedded in his assertion that with the exception of the poets Hebel, Georg Trakl, Gottfried Benn, and Stefan George, he "distrusted all other poets and thinkers through the millennia as being alien, marked by the yellow star of estrangement from Being, Goethe in first position."[5] And he repeatedly cites Richard Wagner as a kindred spirit in language, leaving his notorious anti-Semitism unmentioned but clearly present in the mind of his listeners. Finally, he mentions the seventeenth-century Catholic priest Abraham a Sancta Clara, a famous preacher and writer born just outside Heidegger's birthplace who is remembered today, among other things, for his anti-Semitic tirades in word and print.[6]

Part of his resonance with this vitriolic attack on Heidegger might be explained by Celan's attitude toward West Germans in general. He was convinced

that the anti-Semitic past of many German critics, literary figures, and intellectuals had made them essentially hostile to him. When his volume of poems *Speech-Grille* appeared in March 1959, he was particularly incensed at a review by the well-known critic Günther Blöcker, who, among other things, trivialized his Holocaust poems "Deathfugue" and "Stretto" as "contrapuntal exercises on musical lined paper" and asserted that because of Celan's non-German background, he took greater liberties with the German language than most of his poetic colleagues. For Celan this was enough proof that Blöcker was an ex-Nazi, though he never had evidence to confirm it.[7] Thus he dismissed or found fault with laudatory reviews, which most of them were, and saw anti-Semitism directed against him at work everywhere. These negative perceptions, which reflected growing paranoia, prompted him to intensify his research into the background of contemporary German writers and intellectuals. He spent the day of October 22, 1959, for example, in the Bibliothèque Nationale going through copies of Goebbels's weekly newspaper *Das Reich* for the years 1940 to 1944 and searching for names of writers who had appeared there and were still active on the postwar West German literary scene.[8] And he found his suspicions about widespread anti-Semitism and recrudescent Nazism in that country confirmed when vandals smeared swastikas on the walls of the Cologne synagogue on the night of December 25, 1959, which triggered more than six hundred similar acts against Jewish synagogues, businesses, and apartments in West Germany alone, not to mention dozens more in France and Sweden.[9]

Another reason for the growing dissonance between the poet and Heidegger might have grown out of a shift in Celan's interests that began in 1957–1958. Probably inspired by his friendship with Nelly Sachs, with whom he began corresponding in 1957, Celan started in 1958 to read Gershom Sholem on the cabbala and Jewish mysticism. During this time he also turned to works by other Jewish writers, among them Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and Margarete Susman. Furthermore, as he began to translate recent Russian poets into German, he discovered a deep spiritual affinity with Ossip Mandelstam, who, as a Jew, shared a fate with which he identified strongly.[10] Through these readings Celan seems to have internalized his Jewish spiritual heritage more intensely and found confirmation of his Jewish identity more deeply than ever before. This growing sense of connectedness to the continuity of Jewish experience manifested itself more clearly in *Speech-Grille* than in the earlier three volumes. Here for the first time (with the notable exception of "Deathfugue") his poems begin to thematize openly the defining event of Jewish history in the twentieth century—the Holocaust.[11] And he specifically captured the murder of his mother

by the Nazis in the unpublished poem "Lupine" (Wolfsbohne),[12] which he wrote on October 21, 1959, in reaction to Blöcker's review of *Speech-Grille*.

Otto Pöggeler as an Intermediary

Surprisingly, this heightened awareness of the Holocaust and his Jewishness did not displace or reduce Celan's interest in or attraction to Heidegger's writings. But it did complicate it even more. The thinker always remained on the poet's mind, sometimes in the background, sometimes in the foreground, but never far away. In 1959, for the first time, however, Celan's imaginary dialogue with the thinker began to move closer to person-to-person discourse. This happened through the efforts of someone who carried on conversations with both men and reported the results of those conversations to the other. That intermediary was Otto Pöggeler, a German eight years younger than Celan who had completed a PhD in German literature in 1955 and who had become acquainted with both men personally. From Pöggeler, who was doing postdoctoral research in Paris libraries at the time, and who later went on to become a prominent professor of philosophy in Germany, we know more about what they said and knew about each other than from any other single source.

Pöggeler's conversations with Celan began in 1957 and continued until shortly before the poet's death in 1970. He first met Heidegger in 1959 and conversed with him periodically for more than a decade after that. Though his contact with each man was punctuated by intervals with no contact, apparently he remained on cordial terms with both. Since many recollections of his dealings with the two men can be verified independently, they appear to be generally reliable.

It was reported above how Pöggeler had suggested to Celan during their first meeting in 1957 that Heidegger was someone in Germany who might be receptive to his poetry, whereupon the poet considered sending the poem "Streak" to the thinker. But it was not until Pöggeler first met Heidegger in 1959 that the three-way connection was made. He remembers that during three days of conversation at this time he was surprised that the thinker already knew Celan's poetry and had high regard for it.[13] Yet Pöggeler is uncertain how Heidegger became aware of the younger poet. Given the thinker's strong interest in German poetry and his habit of keeping abreast of leading contemporary poets, it is likely that he had discovered Celan independently, before Pöggeler came on the scene, since the poet had attracted considerable attention in the West German press. Pöggeler speculates that it was through common friends such as Ludwig von Ficker, a literary Maecenas in Innsbruck, or Erhart Kästner, who had introduced

Celan when he received the literary prize in Bremen in 1958, or the prominent French poet René Char, whom Celan had met in Paris in 1952. Char, whose journal from his World War II days as a resistance fighter against the Nazis *(Feuillets d'Hypnos)* Celan had translated for publication in 1958, was first an avid disciple and later a personal friend of Heidegger's. Given his enthusiasm for Heidegger, it seems likely that Char would have shared his enthusiasm for the philosopher with the younger poet.

According to Pöggeler the poem "Argumentum e silentio," which the poet had dedicated to Char a few years earlier, was one of a number by Celan that he and Heidegger read together and discussed during one of their visits in 1959. Clearly the thinker was drawn by something significant that he recognized in the work, or he would not have read the poems as closely as he did with this go-between. Pöggeler's account of how Heidegger questioned what the poet intended with the well-known philosophical concept "Argumentum e silentio" used as the poem's title confirms that he was reading Celan with extraordinary care.

Pöggeler carried back a question to Celan that exemplifies how this dialogue via an intermediary revealed both affinity with and distance from each other. Soon after the volume *Speech-Grille* appeared in March 1959, Heidegger asked Pöggeler what Celan meant by the title. Pöggeler relayed the question directly to Celan and, drawing on his discussion with the thinker, wanted to know specifically if the second word in the title, which also can be translated as "lattice," referred to the bars in a prison, which are known as "Gitter"; the grille, or lattice, on the door of a cloister, which both enables and limits communication; or the latticelike structures of crystals found in snow and in minerals, which in German are also called "Gitter." In almost Heideggerian fashion Celan's answer both revealed and concealed. In other contexts he suggested that he drew the word from the grille or lattice on a cloister door, but for Heidegger he stated emphatically that it referred to none of the above specifically but to lattices generally.[14] In short, he was imitating the late Heidegger's habit of avoiding a single conventional meaning as he mined an ambiguous word for multivalent denotations, thereby opening or expanding rather than restricting it to a single lexical definition.

Celan's remarks about Heidegger are filled with the same dissonance that was becoming typical for his relationship to the thinker. Pöggeler reports, for example, that the poet openly acknowledged the common project he shared with and appreciated in Heidegger as the latter attempted to cleanse contemporary language of its corruption and to return to primordial language, as well as to rescue important words that had fallen victim to the abuse of modern usage.[15] Celan

also made it clear that he found repeated confirmation in the thinker's works that Heidegger had a special openness to poetry, which by implication included his own. Pöggeler was also astonished at the poet's spirited defense of Heidegger's later works, which constituted the majority of those books Celan had read and from which he had learned. He claims Celan would not tolerate any criticism from him of the language in these later works, which Pöggeler disliked.[16] In a 1969 conversation, he claims, Celan also vehemently defended Heidegger against Adorno's 1964 attack published under the title *Jargon of Authenticity (Jargon der Eigentlichkeit).*[17] And his claim that in 1959 Celan rejected the notion of "nature" and would at best accept the Greek word *physis,* a term he had first read and noted in *Being and Time,* suggests further how prominent Heidegger's thinking was in Celan's vocabulary and thought.[18]

At the same time, Heidegger's Nazi past was also implicitly or explicitly present in all their conversations. In 1962, for example, Pöggeler asked for permission to dedicate his forthcoming book, *The Thinking Path of Martin Heidegger (Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers)* to Celan. By Pöggeler's account the poet refused because he had not yet resolved his feelings about the German thinker's past.[19] These misgivings had already surfaced three years earlier during Pöggeler's discussions with Celan over public lectures by Heidegger and the Jewish thinker Martin Buber.

Celan Anticipates a Meeting with Heidegger

In January 1959 the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts and the Academy of Arts in Berlin sponsored a high-profile lecture series on the topic of language. It featured Buber and Heidegger, who were counted among the most significant thinkers of the time. Though their lectures were multifaceted in their approach to the subject, one point Heidegger emphasized was the monologic nature of language (his lecture was published later the same year in his collection *On the Way to Language* under the title "The Way to Language"). Well known for his treatise *I and Thou,* Buber in his lecture took a contrary position on this point and emphasized that human speech generally and poetry specifically were in essence dialogue or at least sought to establish a dialogue.[20] Celan, who learned of this debate from numerous newspaper accounts and from friends, would respond specifically to these views on language later in 1959 and during 1960 as he made notes for his "Meridian" address. But although Buber's views on the nature of poetry as dialogue were much closer to his own than Heidegger's,[21] his immediate response in 1959 to Pöggeler, with whom he discussed the matter, was to con-

demn Buber. His reaction had nothing to do with Buber's views on language but with his willingness to meet with this former Nazi, even though it was expected of him in conjunction with this public event. Celan already knew and appreciated Buber's writings (he had mentioned them in his Bremen address the year before), but he felt that the Jewish thinker, who now lived in Israel but was perhaps the most prominent intellectual spokesman for Judaism in postwar West Germany, had sold out by meeting publicly with this ex-Nazi who had never expressed remorse for his activities during the Third Reich. He told Pöggeler that he personally would not have agreed to an encounter with the German thinker until there had been some accounting by Heidegger for his words and actions during and after 1933. In his mind Buber's meeting conveyed a public sense of accommodation or reconciliation, and he was not about to grant that. To do so was to issue Heidegger a so-called Persilschein, a certificate of successful de-Nazification granted by the Allied occupational forces that drew its popular nickname from a well-known laundry detergent in Germany.[22]

This unresolved conflict between a desire for an accounting by Heidegger of his Nazi past and admiration of his thinking about language reflects a tension that persisted until Celan met his unseen correspondent for the first time in 1967. Yet judging by his remarks to Pöggeler about Buber, by 1959 he was already thinking about a meeting in which he himself could ask Heidegger for a confession or statement of contrition. Pöggeler's acquaintance with the thinker, and Heidegger's reported interest in the poet expressed through this intermediary, began to raise Celan's hopes that such a meeting might materialize.

Though Pöggeler was the primary source of information on Heidegger's reactions to and interest in Celan's person and poetry before their 1967 meeting, he was not the only one. Bernhard Böschenstein, a young Germanist from Switzerland, also acted at least once as an intermediary. He reports that during a visit with Heidegger in 1959 the philosopher played for him a recently released LP of Celan reading his own poems and that Celan was delighted when he heard him describe this act of appreciation by the thinker.[23] Böschenstein's report reinforces the claim that Heidegger already knew and apparently appreciated the poet's works before Pöggeler met him in 1959. Heidegger, of course, had well-honed sensibilities that had drawn him to Hölderlin and Trakl, both of whom critics have recognized as kindred spirits with Celan, and his fascination with what he considered Celan's use of primordial language made the poet a natural magnet for him. But Pöggeler helped raise this awareness of the poetry through his own enthusiasm for the poems and through his personal contact with their author. After reporting to Celan on his conversations with the thinker, Pöggeler claims that

the poet called him "my apologist."[24] He must have been a convincing advocate for Celan's poems, for he further claims that Heidegger agreed with his assertion that Celan's language was in a class with that of Plato and Goethe.[25] In all likelihood Heidegger and Pöggeler had arrived at this judgment independently.

Heidegger's Behind-the-Scenes Efforts on Behalf of Celan

Pöggeler, surprised at Heidegger's eagerness to learn more about Celan's person, also emphasizes that the thinker was fully aware of the poet's status as a Jewish Holocaust survivor. Having heard from Pöggeler about the death of Celan's parents in a German concentration camp in the Ukraine, which Pöggeler had learned from the poet, he asked his go-between for details of their death. Pöggeler gladly supplied them.[26] Perhaps the best evidence of Heidegger's esteem for Celan's remarkable poetry was the thinker's attempt to secure a professorship or lectureship at a German university for the writer. When he first met Heidegger in 1959, Pöggeler learned that he had already recommended the poet for an academic position at the newly established Technological Institute for Design in Ulm, which intended to continue the tradition of the Bauhaus. Also wanting to see the works of Paul Klee featured there, Heidegger even offered to deliver a lecture on Klee's paintings to underscore his support of the new enterprise. Nothing came of either proposal, and Celan knew nothing of Heidegger's attempts to help him. When he heard of them from Pöggeler, he called them "vain efforts" because he believed that the hostility toward him in West Germany was too strong to allow such a thing to happen.[27]

Sometime in summer of 1959, Günther Neske, Heidegger's publisher, approached the poet with a request for Celan to submit a poem that Neske hoped to include in a festschrift he was planning to publish for Heidegger's seventieth birthday. It is possible that Heidegger himself instigated the request, for by now he knew the poet's writings, had received at least one letter from him, and had conversed with him indirectly through Pöggeler. And given the hostile attitude toward the thinker that Celan had expressed to Neske during their conversations in August 1958, Neske might have been reluctant to approach the poet unless Heidegger or someone else had asked him to. Celan's refusal to allow one of his poems to be published has been interpreted as solidarity with his friend Ingeborg Bachmann, who was also invited to contribute a poem but declined because of Heidegger's Nazi past.[28] Her reason, she stated, was that "I knew his inaugural speech as rector [of the University of Freiburg in 1933]."[29] But Celan, in fact, did not decline outright. In a letter to Neske dated August 28, 1959, he gave in-

stead a typically ambivalent answer that revealed, but also concealed, the difficulties he was currently having in reconciling differences toward a man whom one critic has called "doubly the object of spleen and veneration."[30] Replying to Neske, he stated only that "Heidegger requires seriousness and reflection" (Heidegger fordert Ernst und Überlegung) and that he could not respond to Neske's request on short notice. But he went on to say that in principle he would be willing to contribute to a later festschrift for the thinker, an answer that underscores his growing ambivalence rather than outright rejection.[31]

Celan reads *Lectures and Essays* and *Identity and Difference*

An indirect intellectual encounter with Heidegger did occur in August 1959. Despite growing dissonance in his attitude toward the thinker, Celan read two more of his late works—*Lectures and Essays,* which had appeared in 1954 (Celan acquired his copy on November 13, 1958), and the copy of the pamphlet entitled *Identity and Difference* that Günther Neske had published and sent to him in 1958. In *Lectures and Essays* Celan lists August 9 as the date for completing his reading of the essay "Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra" and August 30 for his reading of "The Thing." Other markings substantiate that he also read the essays "What Is Called Thinking," ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . . ," and "Logos (Heraclites, Fragment 50)," though he made no markings in the remaining six essays. In contrast to the abundance of underlines, marginal lines, and key words entered in the margins of these essays, he made only a few markings in *Identity and Difference.* But the date inscribed at the end of his copy—August 30, 1959—confirms that he was reading it simultaneously with *Lectures and Essays.*

Much of what struck him in *Lectures and Essays* repeated or varied Heideggerian themes and ideas that were already familiar and congenial. In the essay "What Is Called Thinking," for example, he underlined sentences dealing with memory as the source of poetry in the broad sense of that word and made three marginal strikings next to the sentence "Memory, the gathering of thought on whatever demands to be thought about, is the fount of poetry" (Gedächtnis, das gesammelte Andenken an das zu-Denkende, ist der Quellgrund des Dichtens," *G* 7:136). And in several passages he came across the familiar "Entsprechen," in its multiple meanings, along with the idea of language speaking to us. One of several examples he underlined comes from the essay ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . ." (". . . dichterisch wohnet der Mensch . . ."): "But the responding in which man authentically listens to the speaking-to-us of language is that saying which speaks to us in the element of poetry" (Das Entsprechen aber, worin der

Mensch eigentlich auf den Zuspruch der Sprache hört, ist jenes Sagen, das im Element des Dichtens spricht, *G* 7:190).

In the Nietzsche essay he also marked a passage where Heidegger gives a slightly different twist to his familiar claim for the thinker as a seer, a concept that with little modification defined for Celan the role of the poet. His marking and underlining of one sentence that plays on the double meaning of *Gesicht*, the German word for seeing and a supernatural vision, suggests that this familiar idea again appealed to him:

> But the only thing that a thinker is ever able to say cannot be proven or refuted logically or empirically . . . It can only be brought to sight (vision) in a questioning-thinking way. In the process, that which is seen always appears as that which is *worthy*-of-question [questionable, capable of being questioned].
>
> [Aber das Einzige, was jeweils ein Denker zu sagen vermag, lässt sich logisch oder empirisch weder beweisen noch widerlegen . . . Es lässt sich nur fragend-denkend zu Gesicht bringen. Das Gesichtete erscheint dabei stets als das Frag*würdige*.] (*G* 7:117)

In the essay entitled "Logos" Celan also reacted with markings to an explication extending over several pages on the thinker's role as a seer and how it relates to his capacity for "authentic hearing" (eigentliches Hören, *G* 7:220), by which he means hearing the "logos." This appears to be similar to what he elsewhere calls the "speaking-to-us of *Being*." Hearing (das Hören), Heidegger claims, is more than an acoustical act. In the type of etymological wordplay both he and Celan loved, he connects it with "belonging" (gehören), "hearkening" (horchen), and "obeying" (gehorchen). In a passage that describes their interconnectedness in certain persons (implied are poets and thinkers), and that Celan marked while reading, he goes on to insist that in order for this to be "authentic" (eigentliches) hearing, mortals must have heard the "logos" with a hearing that involves completely belonging to it: "If it is to be authentic hearing, mortals must already have belonged to the *logos* with a hearing that means nothing less than: belonging to the *logos* (Die Sterblichen müssen, wenn ein eigentliches Hören sein soll, den *logos* schon gehört haben mit einem Gehör, das nichts Geringeres bedeutet als dem *logos* gehören, *G* 7:222).

While reading the essay on Hölderlin entitled ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . . ," Celan came across a discussion of a concept he had not yet encountered in such detail in the thinker's works. Heidegger's reflections on the nature of poetic imagery caught his attention strongly enough to elicit underlinings, marginal markings, and two entries of the word *image* (Bild) next to passages on two con-

secutive pages. Though he obviously knew what poetic images were, he found here an explanation that apparently appealed to him at a time when he was thinking more and more about the theoretical underpinnings of the phenomenon of poetry. An excerpt from these marked passages reveals several ideas that he might have found new:

> The nature of the image is to let something be seen. By contrast, copies and imitations are already mere variations on the genuine image which, as a sight or spectacle, lets the invisible be seen and imagines the invisible in something alien to it. Because poetry takes that mysterious measure . . . therefore it speaks in "images." This is why poetic images are imaginings in a distinctive sense, not mere fancies and illusions but imaginings that are visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar.[32]
>
> [Das Wesen des Bildes ist: etwas sehen zu lassen. Dagegen sind die Abbilder und Nachbilder bereits Abarten des eigentlichen Bildes, das als Anblick das Unsichtbare sehen lässt und es so in ein ihm Fremdes einbildet. Weil das Dichten jenes geheimnisvolle Maß nimmt . . . deshalb spricht es in "Bildern." Darum sind die dichterischen Bilder Ein-Bildungen in einem ausgezeichneten Sinne: nicht bloße Phantasien und Illusionen, sondern Ein-Bildungen als erblickbare Einschlüsse des Fremden in den Anblick des Vertrauten.] (*G* 7:204–205)

Another passage on page 205 that distinguishes between "das Dunkele" and "die Finsternis" (translated by Albert Hofstadter as "darkness" and "blackness" respectively) also caught Celan's attention and elicited another marginal marking next to the text, perhaps because he used these words so frequently in his first two volumes of poems.

In the essay entitled "The Thing" Celan again came across some of Heidegger's antitechnological reflections familiar to him from other works. What he found new there and marked were statements on the devastating effect of the natural sciences on our ways of representing phenomena and the ability to "bring them to language," that is, to see and speak authentically about them, the two activities central to thinking and poetry. Effectively Heidegger was saying that the dominance of the natural sciences as a mode of representation had almost eliminated other ways of seeing and representing the world. Some of the marked passages include the following observations about how scientific description can rob things of their essential reality:

> Science always encounters only what *its* kind of representation has admitted beforehand as an object possible for science . . . Scientific knowledge, which is com-

> pelling within its own sphere, i.e. the sphere of objects, already had annihilated things as things long before the atom bomb exploded . . . The nature of the thing never comes to light, i.e. to language . . . This annihilation is uncanny because it carries before it a twofold delusion: first the notion that science is superior to all other experience in representing what is real in reality, and second the illusion that things could nevertheless be things, unaffected by scientific investigation of reality.
>
> [Die Wissenschaft trifft immer nur auf das, was *ihre* Art des Vorstellens im Vorhinein als den für sie möglichen Gegenstand zugelassen hat . . . Das in seinem Bezirk, dem der Gegenstände, zwingende Wissen der Wissenschaft hat die Dinge als Dinge schon vernichtet, längst bevor die Atombombe explodierte . . . Das Wesen des Dinges kommt nie zum Vorschein, d.h. zur Sprache . . . Die Vernichtung ist deshalb so unheimlich, weil sie eine zwiefache Verblendung vor sich her trägt: einmal die Meinung, dass die Wissenschaft allem übrigen Erfahren voraus das Wirkliche in seiner Wirklichkeit treffe, zum andern den Anschein, als ob, unbeschadet der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung des Wirklichen, die Dinge gleichwohl Dinge sein könnten.] (*G* 7:171–172)

But the apparent compatibility of philosophical views Celan found in this essay did nothing to diminish his critical faculties as a poet. At the end of the essay he made an uncharacteristically sarcastic observation about a Heideggerian sentence that was unlike anything he would say elsewhere about the thinker's style. His annotation is a biting response to a passage in which the thinker consciously used alliteration. Impossible to reproduce in translation, the English "heron and deer . . . mirror and bracelet, book and picture, crown and cross" alliterate in Heidegger's German as "Reiher und Reh . . . Spiegel und Spange, Buch und Bild, Krone und Kreuz" (*G* 7:181). Celan's notation reads, "painful alliterations (George in H[eidegger])" (peinliche Stabreime [George bei H(eidegger)], *B* 389), a damning reference to what sounded like some of the poetry of Stefan George, which Celan could not abide. Among other things, the magisterial George had attempted (and failed) to reintroduce Old High German alliteration into twentieth-century German verse. In his annotation Celan seems to fault Heidegger for the banality of such stylistic pretentiousness and to criticize his well-known attraction to George's poetry. Again this is an example of the cognitive dissonance Celan was now sensing in his relationship to the thinker.

In *Identity and Difference,* which Celan was also reading in August 1959, he found additional reflections on how modern science had displaced the human quest to understand and establish identity in relationship to Being and elevated

the thinking of our age above every other age, causing us to lose our connection to the past. In passages that Celan marked he asks if in the future, nature as such will remain only the narrowly defined "nature" of modern physics, and if history as such will be relegated to an object of detached inquiry unrelated to man's quest for identity. Heidegger realizes we cannot reject modern science, but he asks if we must accept it as the only way of viewing reality or the identity of humans and Being. Referring disparagingly to computers as "thinking machines" ("Denkmaschinen," instead of the more common term "calculating machines" or "Rechenmaschinen" used in the 1950s), he claims, and Celan marks the passage:

> This thinking return to the essential origins of identity . . . needs . . . time, the time of thinking, which is other than the time of calculating that everywhere exerts such force on our thinking today. Today a thinking machine can calculate thousands of relationships in one second, but despite their technical usefulness, they are without essence.
>
> [Die denkende Einkehr in die Wesensherkunft der Identität . . . braucht . . . Zeit, die Zeit des Denkens, die eine andere ist als diejenige des Rechens, das überall heute her an unserem Denken zerrt. Heute errechnet die Denkmaschine in einer Sekunde tausende von Beziehungen. Sie sind trotz ihres technischen Nutzens wesenlos.] (*G* 11:34)

Three marginal lines Celan makes next to Heidegger's conclusion signal enthusiastic endorsement of his call to preserve our connection to tradition and not sell out to modern science. From them it again becomes obvious that both men, despite their innovative poetry and thought, shared a strong conviction about many values of traditional Western language and thought and the need to preserve those values in the face of a science-dominated world that was becoming increasingly hostile to such enterprises. The passage reads:

> Whatever and however we attempt to think, we are thinking in the space of tradition. It holds sway whenever it delivers us from reflection and into anticipatory thinking that is no longer planning. Only when we thinkingly turn to what has already been thought, will we be used for that which is to be thought.
>
> [Was immer und wie immer wir zu denken versuchen, wir denken im Spielraum der Überlieferung. Sie waltet, wenn sie uns aus dem Nachdenken in ein Vordenken befreit, das kein Planen mehr ist. Erst wenn wir uns denkend dem schon Gedachten zuwenden, werden wir verwendet für das noch zu Denkende.] (*G* 11:34).

For Celan the common denominator linking his reading of *Lectures and Essays* with *Identity and Difference* was the implicit or explicit attention to the place of poetry and the role of the poet in a world that, in the face of rapidly advancing technology, was becoming increasingly inhospitable. As in other works by Heidegger he had read, most of the passages he marked in *Lectures and Essays* also explain, justify, and elucidate the role of the poet and validate the importance of his calling, as well as the calling of poetry in general. And in one form or another most of the passages to which he reacted describe the process by which poetry comes into being.

Heidegger and Celan's "Meridian"

In contrast to earlier readings, these two works led to more than intellectual assent. As Celan became more absorbed with defining his own poetic understanding, the poet's role in a world threatened by technology and the loss of "poetry" in the broadest sense, his readings in Heidegger helped precipitate a new project. That project, which resulted in his setting down hundreds of pages of notes and eventuated in his "Meridian" speech the following year, was to compose his own poetics or, as Pöggeler calls it, his "phenomenology of poetry."[33]

Celan's first focused effort in this direction began with his Bremen talk in January 1958. The project then languished until August 1959, only to be resumed again at precisely the time he was reading these two works by Heidegger. This chronology appears to be more than coincidence. It seems that his most recent encounter with the thinker's works was the catalyst that prompted him to begin to declare his independence from Heidegger's thinking about poetry. Apparently he was now ready to formulate and assert his own views on this important topic just as Heidegger had been doing for him over the past seven years.

In both content and form the notes he began making in August 1959 are varied, unsystematic, sometimes tentative, highly personal, and almost always original. One note reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of surrealism.[34] Another alludes to the antipathy he shared with Heidegger for the newly developing "information sciences": "What happens in a poem is not communication, but communication of *one's self*" (Im Gedicht geschieht nicht Mitteilen, sondern *Sich*-mitteilen, *DM* 132). Yet another insists that there is no such thing as "fictional poetry" (fingierte Dichtung, *DM* 166), a reference to the view he shared with Heidegger about the speaking-to-us of language as the source of authentic poetry rather than the poet's imagination. Anticipating certain themes that he develops in the "Meridian" speech, one note dwells on the obscurity of the poem

and compares it to the obscurity of death (*DM* 89). Another claims that a poem is not topical or of immediate interest (aktuell), but rather capable of *being made* topical or of immediate interest (aktualisierbar, *DM* 142).

Two other notes tackle the question of the "Thou" or other in poetry, one by saying enigmatically, "the Thou of the poem, even when it answers 'literally,' never gives an answer" (das Du des Gedichts gibt, auch da wo es "wörtlich" antwortet, niemals Antwort, *DM* 143). Further notes reflect on the double relationship of a poem to its language and to the speaking "I" in the poem (*DM* 144); to the "activity and passivity of the poem" (*DM* 204); and to lyric poetry as a form of "journalism" in contemporary Germany (*DM* 205). Questions are raised: "Is a poem 'composed'?" (*DM* 204), or "How can one describe a vision [or face?] (*DM* 204). Additional notes that attest to Celan's voracious reading cite passages from Leibniz and Kant (*DM* 204, 205).

Fragmentary information about further personal contact between Celan and Heidegger during 1959 raises some tantalizing questions. Perhaps in late 1958 or early 1959, but more probably in the second half of 1959, the publisher Günther Neske sent Celan a copy of Heidegger's book entitled *Plato's Doctrine of Truth: With a Letter about "Humanism."* Inside was an undated, handwritten dedication that read simply: "With friendly greetings. Martin Heidegger" (Mit freundlichem Gruß. Martin Heidegger), accompanied by a card with a note from Neske saying: "Presented on behalf of the author. Günther Neske publishers, Pfullingen. Letter to follow. GN." Given that Neske had not published this work (the publisher was Francke in Bern) and that this edition was not a recent one (it first appeared in 1954), one wonders what prompted Heidegger to have him send it to the poet. Did the thinker, who had frequent contact with his publisher, ask him to initiate contact by means of this book because he believed his discussions with Pöggeler about Celan had opened a door? Or had Neske even heard of these meetings from Heidegger? If not, was he simply continuing his earlier attempts to mediate between the two, unaware of the Celan-Pöggeler-Heidegger connection? Heidegger's dedication does not appear to have been sent in response to any particular gesture on Celan's part, since there is no word of thanks. But his statement "with friendly greetings" was not the formal phrase one would expect if there had been no previous contact. Pöggeler, of course, had made that vicarious contact in 1959, and this appears to have been Heidegger's way of eliciting a personal response from the poet who he now felt might be receptive to his thinking.

Since the complete correspondence between the poet and the thinker is missing, there is no record of Celan's answer, though his punctiliousness in such mat-

ters would have compelled him to thank the author. But what happened between the time he received that inscribed book, probably a few months earlier, and November 1959, when Heidegger sent him a copy of his most recent book, *On the Way to Language,* raises other intriguing questions. The handwritten dedication in that copy reads: "For Paul Celan with cordial greetings and thanks. Martin Heidegger, Nov. 1959" (Für Paul Celan mit herzlichem Gruß und Dank. Martin Heidegger, Nov. 1959). The expression of thanks suggests that Celan had in fact sent him something in the interim. But what? A volume of his own poetry? A book by someone else? A lithograph by his wife, which he sometimes sent to friends? And did he thank Heidegger for this most recent book? Until more documents are found and new pieces in the puzzle of their increasing interaction can be fit in place, answers will have to wait.

These, the second and third volumes of his work with handwritten dedications that Heidegger sent to the poet, would be followed over the next decade by seven more of his works with personalized inscriptions expressing admiration and appreciation of the poet. During that time Heidegger would be free of the ambiguity or conflict that troubled Celan about him. Further, he expressed genuine solicitude for the poet's personal welfare. Celan, meanwhile, would soon embark on what counts as his most significant public response to Heidegger—his "Meridian" speech. Among other things, it would simultaneously be an acknowledgment of his debt to the thinker and a declaration of independence from him.

Heidegger as Catalyst

Celan Begins to Write His Own Poetics, 1959–1960

The few theoretical statements Celan made between 1954 and 1959 about his own poetry and poetry in general all came in response to specific requests or situations: his reply to a question from Hans Bender in late 1954 about how and why he wrote poems, his 1958 answer to the query of the Parisian bookshop Librairie Flinker in which he discussed his current writing projects, and the reflections on his own poetry he included in his acceptance speech for the Bremen literary prize in 1958. All shared at least two common elements: they did not give extensive detail, and to one degree or another all reflected the presence of Heidegger.

At least since 1957 Celan had been thinking about a more comprehensive explication of his own poetics. Pöggeler reports that after first meeting him that year, they agreed to continue talking about the problem of "phenomenology and literature."[1] Celan's Bremen speech was the first step in the germination of this project that in his mind would lead to a more comprehensive formulation of his poetics. For eighteen months following that speech he made no further attempt to continue the project, but two events in August 1959 seem to have provided the catalyst for him to start again. The first was his writing of the prose piece "Conversation in the Mountains," a narrative that explores, among other things, the question of Jewish identity as represented by the meeting of two Jews in the mountains. It was triggered by a missed encounter with the philosopher Theodor Adorno that was planned for the Engadin region of southern Switzerland. The second was his reading of two works by Heidegger that same month—*Lectures and Essays* and *Identity and Difference.* The imagined encounter with Adorno about which he wrote, and the intellectual one with Heidegger, two of the most important contemporary thinkers in Europe, seem to have challenged him to undertake a project with which he apparently hoped to produce a poetics that could contend with or surpass what these two noted thinkers had written in their influential works about poetry and aesthetics.

Since his death, Celan has emerged as something of a philosopher's poet. Just as recent philosophers, including Derrida, Levinas, and Lacoue-Labarthe, have engaged his work (Adorno also had intended to write on his poetry), Celan himself felt drawn to the thinking of earlier philosophers, especially as they thought and wrote about language. In addition, ideas he shared with philosophers are implicit or explicit in a number of poems as well as in his theoretical writings. By 1959 his extensive philosophical readings had left him feeling quite at home in this world, and he had come to view his own ideas as having equal validity with those of thinkers like Heidegger and Adorno. But in contrast to them, he was also a first-rate poet, and he possessed insights they did not. Taken together, this unusually strong grounding in philosophy, together with his unique gifts as a poet, positioned Celan well to take up competition with these two luminaries and to produce a poetics unlike anything written in the twentieth century.

Specific dates reflect that his reading in Heidegger during August 1959 and the beginning of this larger "phenomenology and literature" project appear to be more than coincidence. In the text of *Lectures and Essays* Celan noted that he completed reading various chapters on August 9 and 30, 1959. Another note records his finishing *Identity and Difference* on August 30, 1959. Thus he was reading these texts during the last twenty-two days of the month. Within precisely the same time frame he also began to set down extensive notes for this new poetological project. According to various manuscripts among his posthumous papers, he made more than thirty separate entries about poetry that carry the specific dates of August 19, 20, 22, and 30, 1959—the first group of working notes on which he drew when he wrote his "Meridian" speech the following year. Editors of the extensive notes produced in connection with this project indicate that around the same time (the last twelve days of August 1959), he also produced dozens of additional undated notes dealing with questions of poetry.[2]

These writings constituted the first step in Celan's attempt to set down more systematically his own ideas about poetry, possibly for publication, though without a specific publisher or format in mind. Other events in late 1959 and early 1960, however—notably the mental distress of dealing with real and perceived anti-Semitism among critics who were reviewing his work, the outbreak of anti-Semitic incidents in Germany and other European countries, and the defamatory campaign conducted against him by Claire Goll—so preoccupied him that he neglected this project for a time. Not until March 1960, when he wrote a commissioned essay for the North German Radio on the poetry of Ossip Mandelstam, did he once again begin to set down the type of poetological reflections that he started in August 1959 while reading Heidegger. In May 1960, nine months af-

ter he began the project, he resumed work on it again when he learned that he was to receive the prestigious Büchner Prize of the German Academy of Language and Letters. His knowing that the award was named after Georg Büchner, and that he would be addressing a live audience, caused him to use these earlier notes, produce many new ones, and distill them into the "Meridian" speech delivered in October of that year. What had begun as a general poetics in August 1959 culminated in an abbreviated version that represented only a part of his broader thinking on poetry.

In 1999 the hundreds of pages of notes he produced during these various working phases were published as a single corpus of materials under the title *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien*. Its editors emphasize that "a major part of the concept of the Büchner speech was already in place when he received the news of the decision of the Darmstadt Academy [of Language and Poetry]" (*DM* xii). They point out further that only about one-sixth of the material in these notes served as direct sources for the Büchner speech (*DM* 256), a reflection of the project's original concept as a more comprehensive poetics. Signs of Heidegger's role as a catalyst were already evident in the earliest stage, and they continued throughout the later ones as Celan repeated and expanded on ideas that were present from the outset.

Heideggerian Vocabulary in Celan's Working Notes

Several specific words or longer phrases from notations written during this first phase can be traced directly to Heidegger. One is *equiprimordialness* (Gleichursprünglichkeit), which surfaces in a note reflecting on the "equiprimordialness of obscurity in the poem" (Gleichursprünglichkeit des Dunkels im Gedicht, *DM* 87). Almost surely he picked up this signature Heideggerian term from *Being and Time*, where it recurs throughout. Celan had read that work in 1953 and made extensive markings where the term occurred (*G* 2:213–214). He extended Heidegger's thinking by claiming that both the poem's language and its obscurity are equiprimordial.

Another recognizable borrowing occurs in a note he wrote on August 30, 1959, dealing with two topics—the poem's obscurity and death: "The obscurity of the poem = the obscurity of death. Humans = mortals. Thus the poem, as something that remains mindful of death, counts as one of the most human aspects [qualities] of a human being" (Die Dunkelheit des Gedichts = die Dunkelheit des Todes. Die Menschen = die Sterblichen. Darum zählt das Gedicht, als das des Todes eingedenkt bleibende, zum Menschlichsten am Menschen, *DM* 89).

On the same day he set down this reflection, Celan had read an essay in Heidegger's *Lectures and Essays* entitled "The Thing." There he underlined parts of a passage and, on the same page, made a handwritten marginal note dealing with Heidegger's reference to the "fourfold," which the thinker identifies as "earth and sky, divinities and mortals" (*G* 7:179–180). Heidegger goes on to define the last term in his foursome by stating that "mortals are humans" (die Sterblichen sind die Menschen), the source for Celan's citation used in the August 30 note that "mortals = humans." While the assertion that "mortals are human" seems obvious, Heidegger makes this point specifically in order to distinguish humans from animals, who are not mortals. According to him, animals do not die in the sense that humans do; they simply perish ("Das Tier verendet"). In his handwritten note at the bottom of this page of the text, Celan entered Heidegger's terms ("mortals" and "humans"), and though transposing them, kept the basic idea intact. His notation reads: "A human = a mortal" (Der Mensch = Der Sterbliche). In light of his later elaboration on the topic, this appears to be shorthand for his view that because of their human origins, poems and mortals are not destined to endure. He then transferred this reverse formulation directly into the part of the August 30 note cited above, where it reads: "Humans = mortals" (Die Menschen = die Sterblichen). The statement's special usage becomes clear only when read in the context of the passage in Heidegger from which he drew and wrote it, perhaps on the same day he read it.

Another notation that testifies of Heidegger's role as one of the catalysts for these reflections contains an equally obscure reference to the essay on Nietzsche that Celan was reading in August 1959 in *Lectures and Essays*. It contains a numbered list of cue words on which he apparently hoped to expand. The third item on Celan's list contains lexical items familiar from Heidegger's thought—"the things, the world, being, entities, appearance" (Die Dinge, die Welt, das Sein, das Seiende, Erscheinen). But the fourth notation makes a direct connection when it mentions "Thinking and Language" (Denken und Sprache), followed in brackets by the term "Theaetet citation etc." (Denken und Sprache [Theaetet Zitat etc.], *DM* 104).

The "Theaetet citation" refers to a passage in Heidegger's Nietzsche essay where Heidegger cites a statement from Plato's "Theaitetos" essay. Celan read and underlined Heidegger's translation of this sentence, which, according to the thinker, describes thinking as a "conversation of the soul with itself" (Selbstgespräch der Seele mit sich selbst, *G* 7:108). Heidegger's idiosyncratic rendering of the Greek on the same page transforms the citation into "The saying Gathering of Self that the soul goes through on the way to itself in the circumference of

everything it beholds" (Das sagende Sichsammeln, das die Seele selbst auf dem Weg zu sich selbst durchgeht, im Umkreis dessen, was je sie erblickt, *G* 7:108).

Not only did Celan read and underline Heidegger's unusual translation at this point in *Lectures and Essays,* but he also copied and reentered it by hand at the spot in his own German edition of Plato where it occurred, crediting Heidegger as the German translator.[3] This, too, confirms that he was copying and working directly from the text of *Lectures and Essays* while writing these notes in August 1959. Though it is not fully developed at this point, the idea he extrapolated from Heidegger's rendering of this passage—that poetry, like thinking, might be viewed as a conversation of the poet with himself—preoccupied him in subsequent months and became a central point of difference between his thinking and Heidegger's as he formulated his own poetics.

Affinity of Views in the Working Notes

By no means were all of Celan's views on poetry a direct or indirect response to specific Heideggerian concepts, though in some cases they clearly were. But Heidegger, and to a lesser extent Adorno, had thought broadly and originally about poetry and language, and it appears that they energized him to do the same. Like them, his subject matter in the reflections he wrote between August 1959 and October 1960 covers a wide range and touches on some of the same issues about which the two thinkers had generalized, though he also focused on more specific poetological topics than they had done. His reflections, for example, range from contemporary literary theory and movements, including concrete poetry, to cybernetics and information theory; from the *Nibelungenlied* to surrealism; and from the nature of metaphors to questions of accent, rhythm, tempus, and timbre in poetry. Furthermore, his notes ask basic questions about the nature of the poem, such as whether it is "composed" or originates in another way; whether it can be described at all; whether it intends to communicate, and if so what; and what its relationship is to an "Other." They also reflect on whether that "Other" answers when it is addressed and how one is to understand the double relationship of the poem to its own language and to that of the poetic "I." Other topics deal with the matter of obscurity and unintelligibility in the poem, the nature of the poetic voice, and the function of that voice. Yet others center on Celan's interest in the relationship of the poem to the events in the world from which it emerged and to its author, that is, the extent to which the poet himself or the social and political events of the time intrude into, attach themselves to, or are reflected in a poem.

In addition, the notes contain a separate bibliographic section listing the authors and titles of more than two dozen specific works that Celan considered important for this poetology. As we would expect, Heidegger's name appears in this section, followed by the titles *Being and Time* and *On the Essence of Reason* (*Vom Wesen des Grundes, DM* 210). Further, throughout his notes he paraphrases, refers to, or specifically cites dozens of other philosophers and writers, often without giving specific bibliographic references. A number of his notes make clear that some of the affinity of thought he had sensed so strongly when first reading Heidegger still infused his thinking. Sometimes he formulated this conjunction of Heidegger's views and his own by discrete borrowing, such as a note of August 19, 1959, that reads simply: "Poetry: *not* the art of expression!"(Dichtung: *keine* Ausdruckskunst! *DM* 143). In his *Lectures and Essays* Heidegger had used a similar term in lamenting the corruption of poetic language in an age that has reduced it to a mere "means of expression" (Die Sprache wird zum Mittel des Ausdrucks, *G* 7:193). Celan makes this coincidence of views more explicit in other passages, where he reiterates his agreement with Heidegger's notion of "the poem as a gift." In these notes he now describes it as "a gift to an inspired person" (das Gedicht als Geschenk an den Beseelten, *DM* 63, 75, 76); or, in another formulation, "the poem gives itself . . . into your hands" (Das Gedicht gibt sich dir . . . in die Hand, *DM* 34). Elsewhere he also repeats the related Heideggerian notion of how language "speaks to" the poet (der Zuspruch der Sprache). Several entries vary the noun *Zuspruch* slightly and use instead "das Zusprechende" (*DM* 63, 76, 111) to describe the phenomenon of the poet's hearing and reproducing language that speaks to him, but the meaning in all of them is essentially the same. One of these passages also hints at its origin by using another familiar Heideggerian term in the same sentence—the verb "to appropriate/come into its own" (sich ereignen) used in conjunction with the speaking-to-us of language: "There is the narrow, confined space where poetry comes into its own, a liberation, and not only of language, but also of the speaker—through that which speaks to him" (Es gibt, in dem schmalen, engen Raum, wo Dichtung sich ereignet, ein Freiwerden, nicht nur der Sprache, sondern auch des Sprechenden-durch das sich ihm Zusprechende, *DM* 63, 75–76).

Echoes, Allusions, Imitations

In addition to incorporating these concepts from the thinker into his notes, in many others Celan also uses what sounds like distinctive Heideggerian diction, rhetoric, and allusions, though specific sources cannot always be identified. One

example occurs in a phrase on the "alleged primordialness" (vermeintliche Ursprünglichkeit, *DM* 85) of the poem. Another notation with a familiar ring consists of two words that he almost surely borrowed from the thinker's treasury of obscure or archaic meanings. In Heidegger they occur in the essay "The Way to Language" in his collection *On the Way to Language,* where the thinker, drawing on historical usage, plays on what he sees as similar meanings of the German *Ereignis* and the obscure term *Er-äugen* (Das Ereignis ereignet in seinem Eräugen des Menschenwesens, *G* 12:249). The first word is usually translated into English as "event of appropriation" or "a coming into its own," but the second, which is archaic and almost untranslatable, originally refers to the act of seeing. It might be rendered in English as "espy" or "descry," though neither captures the root word *eye* embedded in the German original. In characteristic fashion Celan's notation, which echoes this passage, modifies the second term only slightly but otherwise keeps Heidegger's formulations intact. It reads, "Event of appropriation = descrying?? before the eyes—" (Ereignis = Eräugnis?? vor Augen—*DM* 98). What he intended with this equation is unclear, but its provenance with Heidegger seems unmistakable.

Another example of an unattributed borrowing is hidden in a note that reads: "Some things come, perhaps, even now, even today, on dove's feet" (Einiges kommt, vielleicht, auch jetzt, auch heute noch, auf Taubenfüßen, *DM* 108). While reading *What Is Called Thinking* in 1954, he had come across a passage in which Heidegger cited a claim in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* that provided the source of this image. It speaks of revolutionary ideas coming on dove's feet. Nietzsche's statement as cited by Heidegger reads, "It is the stillest words that bring the storm. Thoughts that come on dove's feet direct the world" (Die stillsten Worte sind es, welche den Sturm bringen. Gedanken, die mit Taubenfüßen kommen, lenken die Welt, *G* 8:77).

It is possible that Celan read this Nietzsche citation independently of Heidegger's citation of it, but the fact that he copied it verbatim out of *What Is Called Thinking* and into his notebook while reading it in 1954 suggests strongly that this was his source. Like so much else he read, his remarkable memory stored and recalled it in 1959–1960.

A final example of allusions to Heidegger might be present in two obscure notes, one a later reworking of the other, that begin with thoughts on being Jewish and go on to reflect on the word *Umkehr,* which can mean a reversal or turning away from old thinking and behavior or, in a religious context, doing penance and/or being converted to a new life. Lamenting how frequently the word itself is discussed (presumably in contemporary Germany) but how rarely the action

happens in real behavior, Celan reasons, "There are too many one-way streets. And reverse traffic and reversal are two different matters. And *oh*, even on field paths there appears to be little occasion for it" (Es gibt zu viele Einbahnstrassen. Und Gegenverkehr und Umkehr sind zweierlei. Und *ach*, auch auf Feldwegen scheint es wenig Gelegenheit dazu zu geben, *DM* 199; cf. a similar note on 131). The word for "field paths" almost surely alludes to Heidegger's pamphlet *The Field Path*, which Celan had read in 1951, and the painful observation that even on such paths there exists little occasion for reversal or penance could easily be construed as veiled criticism of the thinker's unwillingness to admit and renounce his Nazi past.

Additional evidence of the thinker's presence stands out in a number of notes whose diction bears an unmistakable resemblance to Heidegger's in sound, structure, or both. In several, for example, Celan records the noun "he who/that which is to come" (der/das Kommende, *DM* 42, 131, 149), which clearly borrows a Heideggerian term familiar to him from the thinker's writings. He also creates neologisms that imitate the thinker's practice of adding a prefix to one word (for example, Celan's awkward sounding "de-hope" [enthoffen, *DM* 91]), or Heidegger's penchant for combining two known words in a way that defamiliarizes the new constellation (for example, "poem-long" [gedichtlang, *DM* 53]), or of creating easily recognizable compound nouns for new concepts (for example, "roots of being" [Seinswurzeln, *DM* 166]). Whether these coinages succeed is another matter, as it is with Heidegger. But beyond the compatibility Celan felt with the thinker's reflections on how poetry originates, it was Heidegger's sovereignty in creating new words and meanings generally that seems to have invited this specific form of imitation. Celan's own propensity for wordplays and coinages in his poetry, prose, and letters is pronounced, but only in these notes does the diction sound as if some of it had its origins in Heidegger.

Entire sentences among Celan's notations also could be mistaken easily for original statements by the thinker. Among them are the assertion, "The poet dwells in his words" (Der Dichter wohnt in seinen Worten, *DM* 115); or the observation that the Russian Acmeist poets "lead language into the proximity of being" (die Sprache in die Nähe des Seins führen, *DM* 112); or the turn of speech, "Open on all sides we betake ourselves into wordlessness and answerlessness" (offen nach allen Seiten hin begeben wir uns ins Wort-und Antwortlose, *DM* 66).

Another passage, variations of which recur in other notes, uses unmistakable Heidegger diction. There Celan writes of "the most extreme thought that the poem in human terms ventures to think" (das Äußerste, dass das Gedicht men-

schlicherweise zu denken wagt, *DM* 62). Celan's unusual construction, which claims that an abstraction like a poem "thinks a thought," imitates Heidegger's common practice of making an intransitive verb function as a transitive one by giving it a direct object, thus altering accepted semantic usage. The thinker does this, for example, in *Wrong Paths,* with sentences such as, "A view in which we are able to think Rilke's poetry more distinctly (eine Sicht, in der wir Rilkes Dichtung deutlicher zu denken vermögen, *G* 5:277).

Saying that a certain manner of thinking is but one of the paths a poem can follow, Celan's subsequent sentence uses more trademark Heideggerian terms as it points out other possibilities of the poem: "Others, coming from the ungrounded, lead back into the ungrounded; its native land for them is the abyss; its language is being underway" (Andere [Wege], aus dem Bodenlosen kommend, führen ins Bodenlose zurück; der Abgrund ist ihnen die Heimat; ihre Sprache ist ihnen das Unterwegssein, *DM* 62). The three distinctive Heideggerian terms in this passage are the *abyss* (Abgrund), the *ungrounded* (das Bodenlose), and the German substantive for "on the way" (or "being underway"), which Celan had already cited in his Bremen speech and was the title of Heidegger's most recent work, *On the Way to Language,* which had appeared in November 1959. And the listing together in another note of four fundamental Heideggerian concepts, accompanied by question marks, but without commentary, is probably more than random association. It reads only: "?essential ground / abyss / ?primordial ground / ?Non-ground" (?Wesensgrund / ?Abgrund / Urgrund / ?Ungrund, *DM* 89).

Another example of his imitating or appropriating Heideggerian diction occurs in various notations that make a language move already familiar from the thinker's works. It involves an unusual use of the verb *to stand*, a privileged word with Heidegger. A note by Celan copies the thinker's habit of using a familiar word to generate a less-familiar or unfamiliar one, which he then endows with a new meaning. By experimenting with the root word for the infinitive *to stand* (stehen), he concludes: "objects = that which stands against (Gegenstände = das Entgegenstehende, *DM* 212). From the German term for "objects" (Gegenstände), which literally means "a standing against," he takes the root that derives from "to stand" and uses the "equals" symbol to make the entire word synonymous with another word that means roughly "that which stands against," though lexically it has nothing to do with objects. What he intends is subject to interpretation, but this attempt to make synonyms out of these two seemingly unrelated words duplicates almost exactly what Heidegger had done with the same two nouns in his *Lectures and Essays,* where he, too, had made them synonyms.[4]

This is one of more than a dozen similar wordplays in these notes on the concept of "standing," all of which have to do with the nature of poetry.

Although it cannot be demonstrated conclusively, it seems likely that most of these plays on *to stand* probably keyed on the diction of a specific passage in Heidegger's essay on "The Origin of the Work of Art" in *Wrong Paths*. When reading it in 1953, Celan had underlined and made a slash in the margin next to a statement on "the pure standing-in-itself of the work [of art]" (das reine Insichstehen des Werkes, *G* 5:25). Perhaps even then, and definitely by the time he formulated his own ideas in his "Meridian" notes of 1959–1960, he no longer accepted this essentially solipsistic view of the poem as a work of art that existed only in and for itself. Instead he used Heidegger's rhetoric to stand this concept on its head. In a statement that he repeats and varies in a number of notes, he insists that the poem "stands [interjects itself] in time" (steht in die Zeit hinein, *DM* 34, 69, 106, 113, 215). Nor is it a coincidence that several times he uses various compound nouns containing the root words for "to stand" in reinforcing his point that every poem "stands" in the present. One notation that makes this claim also plays on other words that use "standing" as a root, a connection that is clear in German but is almost lost in translation. It asserts that the poem "is the language-becoming-form of a single person, it has counter-standing, concreteness, actuality, presence. It stands [interjects itself] in time" (Es ist gestaltgewordene Sprache eines Einzelnen, es hat Gegenständlichkeit, Gegen*ständig*keit, Gegen*wärtig*keit, Präsenz. Es steht in die Zeit hinein, *DM* 69).

Gellhaus has investigated Celan's complex understanding of the concept of time, paying special attention to "world time" (Weltzeit),[5] a compound that appears to be related to the idea of the poem's "standing" in time. Celan first encountered this widely used phrase while reading *Being and Time* in 1952 or 1953 (see *G* 2:535, 536, 548, 553–554) and again entered it in his notebook while reading *Introduction to Metaphysics* in late 1954, where he also connected it with the verb *to stand:* "Poetry does not stand so much in relation to time as to world time" (Die Dichtung steht nicht zu sehr in einem Verhältnis zur Zeit, sondern zu einer Weltzeit, *B* 351).

Celan uses this Heideggerian coinage in these "Meridian" notes to produce another observation that refers to "the conjoining of world time and heart time" (Weltzeit und Herzzeit in ihrer Verklammerung, *DM* 195). If the coinage "heart time" reflects the poet's (or poem's) personal, subjective time, then it would appear that Celan's insistence on the poem's "standing in time" is related to "world time" (Weltzeit), which for Heidegger is a designation for time and events as we reckon them.[6]

Several other notations hint at a meaning. One claims that "inasmuch as language is able to be a world" (sofern Sprache Welt zu sein vermag), the poem comes into the world "laden with world" (mit Welt befrachtet, *DM* 84), a notion that might refer to the world that his language experienced and survived in the Nazi era. Thus it would show traces of its origins, as well as the events of the epoch in which it developed and matured. Another note seems to expand on this view: "The modi, the tempora, the aspects of the times: in the poem they dwell together intimately" (Die Modi, die Tempora, die Aspekte der Zeit: im Gedicht wohnen sie dicht beieinander, *DM* 119). Yet another claims that "the poem remains *open to time,* time can join it, time *participates*" (das Gedicht bleibt zeitoffen, Zeit kann hinzutreten, Zeit partizipiert, *DM* 71). In all these notes on the relationship of the poem to time Celan appears to be taking issue with Heidegger's view about the "pure standing-in-itself of the poem" that he had read in 1953.

Another note that uses the root word *stand* also suggests an attempt by Celan to differentiate his thinking from Heidegger's. It pertains to what might be called the poem's "durability" or permanence—whether it can become "immortal" or "endless." The works by Heidegger that Celan had read by this time suggest the thinker's position on this point was ambivalent. In one of Celan's notes, however, he suggests that it had this possibility. His note reads, "The standing-in-infinity [endlessness] of the poem: hence its character as a parable" (Das Ins-Unendliche-Stehen des Gedichts: dadurch sein Gleichnis-Charakter, *DM* 122). He would develop this idea more fully in his "Meridian" speech a few months later.

Declaring Independence from Heidegger

Despite the obvious indebtedness to or affinities with his vis-à-vis described here, a few other notes for this project represent a distinct movement away from or break with Heidegger's thinking about language, and an attempt to declare his autonomy from this towering figure who had taught him so much but whom he by now viewed with considerable misgiving. Yet even in partial rejection, Heidegger remained Celan's reference point, though usually obscured.

This effort by Celan to stake out an autonomous position is evident, for example, in passages that cite the thinker's use of the term *response* (Entsprechen) and its alternate English meaning of "correspondence" (or my rendering as "despeaking"). In *On the Way to Language* Heidegger gives one definition of this, a term that recurs throughout his late work: "Speech that draws on something through listening is response . . . As a listening that draws on something, response

is simultaneously a reply of recognition. Mortals speak to that extent that in dual fashion they respond to language through drawing on and replying to it" (Das hörend-entnehmende Sprechen ist Ent-sprechen . . . Das Entsprechen ist als hörendes Entnehmen zugleich anerkennendes Entgegnen. Die Sterblichen sprechen, insofern sie auf eine zwiefältige Weise, entnehmend-entgegnend, der Sprache entsprechen, *G* 12:32). Another exposition of the term occurs in *Lectures and Essays:* "But the responding in which man authentically listens to the speaking-to-us of language is that saying which speaks in the element of poetry"[7] (Das Entsprechen aber, worin der Mensch eigentlich auf den Zuspruch der Sprache hört, ist jenes Sagen, das im Element des Dichtens spricht, *G* 7:194).

Whenever this word appears in one of his "Meridian" notes, Celan uses quotation marks to signal that he is citing it from an unidentified source. In one way or another he simultaneously qualifies or contradicts its usage by his source, which is clearly Heidegger. In a sentence that does this when speaking of Ossip Mandelstam's poetry, for example, he strikes out another phrase (set here in brackets) that almost certainly acknowledges its origins in Heidegger. The passage reads, "Here the poem is the poem of someone who knows . . . that the language of his poem is neither 'reponse' nor ['more primordial' language or even] language generally, but rather *actualized* language" (Das Gedicht ist hier das Gedicht dessen, der weiß . . . dass die Sprache seines Gedichts weder "Entsprechung" noch ["ursprünglichere" Sprache oder gar] Sprache schlechthin ist, sondern *aktualisierte* Sprache, *DM* 69). Similar to what he did with the term *response,* Celan probably sets quotation marks around the awkward comparative term for "more primordial" language to emphasize that it, too, refers to a specific source. In this case it is the distinctive Heideggerian formulation "more primordial speaking" (ursprünglicheres Sprechen) that the poet first read in *What Is Called Thinking* (*G* 8:189) in 1954 and entered in his notebook before citing it in slightly modified form in the present round of work.

In this passage Celan appears to challenge or modify two ideas he had encountered in the late Heidegger. The first is that language itself speaks to the poet and that the poet's role is one of responsive listening, of renouncing his own inclinations to speak, or of "de-speaking" in order that language may speak or respond to and through him. In stating that the origin of the poem's language is not solely "response" to language, Celan is clearly taking issue with this fundamental aesthetic position espoused by Heidegger.

The second challenge seems to occur in his claim that Mandelstam's poetic language is not pure or primordial language ("Sprache schlechthin") but rather "actualized" language, by which he appears to mean that in some sense poetic

language is bound to the real world and exists in and for the present. A few months later in the "Meridian" speech he would make the same claim for his own poetry. By tying the language of his poetry to the present, he again seems to be negating Heidegger's aforementioned claim about the "pure standing-in-itself" of the poem. Here, too, it appears Celan is trying to set himself apart from Heidegger's views on the language of poetry.

Other notes on a topic that apparently cite or refer to Heidegger also spell out for the first time a different position regarding the question of the poet's presence in a poem. One entry that begins with the familiar term "the They" (das Man) almost surely uses it in the same sense that he found it used when reading section 27 of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. There the thinker wrote, "Everyone is the other, and no one himself. The *they*, which supplies the answer to the question of the *who* of everyday Dasein, is the *nobody* to whom every Dasein has already surrendered in Being-among-one-another"[8] (Jeder ist der Andere und Keiner er selbst. Das *Man*, mit dem sich die Frage nach dem *Wer* des alltäglichen Daseins beantwortet, ist das *Niemand*, dem alles Dasein im Untereinandersein sich je schon ausgeliefert hat, *G* 2:170).

Referring to Georg Büchner's short story "Lenz," Celan's note begins with this German impersonal *they* but, as if remembering Heidegger's explanation of the term, suddenly reverses itself and declares that this "they" is not an impersonal "no one" but a distinct and recognizable "I" whom he identifies as Lenz himself: "*They* (= I, Lenz) this 'they' here clearly has the value of an I" (*man* [= ich, Lenz] dieses "man" hat hier deutlich einen Ich-Wert, *DM* 52).

Another note in which Celan attempts to define what a poem is carries the notion of the poet's presence in the poem one step farther. In insisting on a human voice as the speaker, it uses a term that appears to come straight from a passage he read and marked years earlier in Heidegger—"radical individuation." The passage from *Being and Time* reads, "And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical *individuation*"[9] (Die Transzendenz des Seins des Daseins ist eine ausgezeichnete sofern in ihr die Möglichkeit und die Notwendigkeit der radikalsten *Individuation* liegt, *G* 2:51). Celan's note that borrows this concept reads, "The poem: a self realizing of language through radical individuation, i.e. unique, irreproducible speaking of an individual" (Das Gedicht: ein Sichrealisieren der Sprache durch radikale Individuation, d.h. einmaliges, unwiederholbares Sprechen eines Einzelnen, *DM* 73).

In one way or another each of the above notes seems to be modifying or distancing itself from the notion incorporated in Heidegger's assertions that lan-

guage speaks to and through the poet, that the poet as a person is hidden behind the language that comes to him or her, and that the poet is therefore not a presence in the poem. Heidegger's views on this topic were probably on Celan's mind while the poet was writing these notes, for during late 1959 or the first part of 1960 he was reading the thinker's latest work, *On the Way to Language*. There Heidegger repeatedly reiterates his earlier claims that language speaks and that the poet's role is to hear and reproduce this "speaking of language" (das Sprechen der Sprache, *G* 12:243). Judging by his notes, Celan no longer accepted this view without reservation. He had now come to the position that an identifiable individual is present as a voice in the poem. This would become one of several fundamental differences between his and Heidegger's views that entered into and became central to his "Meridian" speech in October 1960.

The Meridian

An "Implicit Dialogue with Heidegger," 1960

When Celan received the Büchner Prize and delivered his "Meridian" speech on October 22, 1960, many of the easily identifiable borrowings from or references to Heidegger found in earlier notes had disappeared. Enough remained visible, however, that philosophers and literary critics since then have repeatedly interpreted the speech in Heideggerian terms or elucidated specific Heideggerian thinking in its contents.[1] Lacoue-Labarthe sees "The Meridian" as "a response to Heidegger," and Véronique Fóti asserts that "the name written, so to speak, in invisible ink throughout and across the text is that of Heidegger."[2] In perhaps the most thorough analysis of this connection, Gellhaus in 1995 called it an "implicit dialogue with Heidegger."[3]

Although accurate to a degree, these brief descriptions cannot take into account the fact that Heidegger is not the only addressee in this complex work. Critics have demonstrated how directly or indirectly it responds to or engages a number of other figures. It rejects, for example, the poet Gottfried Benn's concept of the poem as a monologue from which a poetic "I" has disappeared.[4] And it takes issue with Mallarmé's well-known idea of the "absolute poem"; with the view of literary "topoi" in European poetry, as explicated in the writings of Ernst Robert Curtius and Gustav René Hocke; with Hugo Friedrich's claims for the nature of modern poetry generally; and, according to Hans Mayer, with Proust's concept of time. And in groundbreaking work that changes the way at least some of the speech is read, Barbara Wiedemann has demonstrated that there are still faint traces of or references to Claire Goll's character defamation and charges of plagiarism that were obvious in the original notes before Celan modified or excised them. Finally, Fóti points to the "intensive dialogue not only with the living but also with the dead—with Büchner, Lenz, Benjamin, Mallarmé, Kafka, Mandelstam, Schestov, and even Pascal and Malebranche"—found in the speech.[5]

The text, then, is more than an implicit dialogue with Heidegger alone, although his presence looms larger than any of the others Celan was addressing. In this attempted "phenomenology of literature," which has since attained the status of a fundamental text of twentieth-century poetics, Heidegger was the central dialogue partner because his dominant thinking about language was more powerful and closer to Celan's than were the ideas of others. But just as Celan avoided naming many other conversational partners, he did not identify Heidegger openly. Yet no matter how he tried to conceal Heidegger's presence, he was forced to paraphrase, to allude to, and to use the thinker's language more than that of any of the other partners or opponents. Given that this speech distills hundreds of pages of notes into sixteen printed pages in today's editions, we can only deduce that Heidegger's obvious presence in earlier stages had been reduced largely to shorthand or code words. Within the multiple layers of this "elliptic, allusive" text, as Levinas calls it,[6] the present chapter will attempt to decipher Celan's shorthand in those sections where he conducts his implicit dialogue with the thinker.

Art versus Poetry: Partial Agreement with Heidegger

At first glance Heidegger does not appear to play a role in the opening section of the speech, where Celan addresses a topic that he himself labels "hostility toward art" (Kunstfeindlichkeit).[7] Heidegger had written a significant treatise on *The Origin of Work of Art*, and in his vocabulary *art* was normally a positive word. But in his attempt to "free poetry from art,"[8] Celan uses the term *art* in a restrictive sense that reveals some similarities to Heidegger's late thought. For Celan the term meant "poetic art" as practiced in modern society, which he for the most part rejected. One of his notes made before the speech reads, "Poetry is not '*the art of words*'" (Dichtung ist nicht *Wortkunst*, *DM* 147). Beneath the surface this statement reveals a kinship to views Heidegger articulated throughout his work about the role of "framing" (Ge-stell) in the contemporary world. In the thinker's view this "framing"—the tendency "to set up all that is present being as technical inventory" (alles Anwesende als technischen Bestand zu bestellen, *G* 2:251)—transforms language into nothing more than "information." This phenomenon is evident in modern "information theory," a term Heidegger cites in *On the Way to Language* to illustrate his point (*G* 12:252–253). The devastating results for poetic language are obvious, and it is here that his thinking moves into the proximity of the poet's.

Celan derides the superficiality of information theory for poetry when he

draws on one of its trademark terms in a note for *The Meridian* to assert that the essence of the poem cannot be conveyed in a "message" (he uses the English word in the mocking phonetic transcription "messägsch" [*DM* 138]). In another note that plays on the German word for *Occident* and the notion of an evening's entertainment, he goes on to make a clear distinction between the "artistic" poetry, which he considered the "artificial" product of contemporary society, and genuine poetic art: "Artistry and the Art of Words—there might be something evening-land [Occidental]- evening-filling [entertaining] about them. Poetry is something different . . . heart- and heaven-gray, breath-permeating language in the present (Artistik und Wortkunst—das mag etwas Abendländisch-Abendfüllendes für sich haben. Dichtung ist etwas anderes . . . herz- und himmelsgraue, atemdurchwachsende Sprache in der Zeit, *DM* 110).

Although Heidegger never made this clear distinction, his views on the decline, misuse, and abuse of language in the "framing" of contemporary culture that made primordial poetry in his age so rare aligned him closely with Celan. In a passage from the essay ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . ." in *Lectures and Essays,* which Celan had read in 1959, Heidegger notes the danger in modern society of language's decline into corrupted, instrumental usage:

> Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the mistress of man. When this relation of dominance gets inverted, man hits upon strange machinations [manipulations]. Language becomes a means of expression. As expression, language can deteriorate into a mere print medium.
>
> [Der Mensch gebärdet sich, als sei er Bildner und Meister der Sprache, während doch sie die Herrin des Menschen bleibt. Wenn dieses Herrschaftsverhältnis sich umkehrt, dann verfällt der Mensch auf seltsame Machenschaften. Die Sprache wird zum Mittel des Ausdrucks. Als Ausdruck kann die Sprache zum bloßen Druckmittel herabsinken.] (*G* 7:193–194)[9]

In a letter written a few months before the "Meridian" speech, Celan echoes Heidegger's notion of *techne* as a description of the abuse of "made-up" or "constructed" poetic language in the present age. Illustrating how this tendency toward language manipulation among contemporary poets degenerates into bad poetry, and in answer to the question of how poems are "made," he uses and expands on the same word Heidegger chose for this process—*machination:* "Years ago I was able closely to observe firsthand, and later from some distance, how the 'making' [of poems], proceeding by way of trickery, gradually becomes machination" (Ich habe es vor Jahren eine Zeitlang mit angesehen und später aus einiger Entfernung genau beobachten können, wie das "Machen" über die

"Mache" allmählich zur Machenschaft wird, *GW* 3:178). Wiedemann argues that Celan refers here to Claire Goll's manipulations in editing her own husband's work and to her related machinations in accusing Celan of plagiarism, but like much of Celan's intentionally ambiguous language it is also a valid reflection of the same dismay expressed by Heidegger over the misuse of language and the dangers inherent in its deterioration into purely instrumental usage.[10]

Critics have generally failed to see another immediate context for this section of the speech. It is the horror Celan shared with Heidegger at what both men saw happening in the new discipline of "cybernetics" and its related field of "information theory," two terms that Celan reproduces in his notes for "The Meridian." I have referred to Heidegger's later thought on the negative impact of science and technology on humankind's ability to "bring to language" the phenomenal world authentically, as well as to his contempt for "thinking machines" (that is, computers) and their vast technological capacity that allowed no connection to authentic existence. But Celan goes farther. More than a dozen notes among the hundreds he wrote for the "Meridian" speech specifically mention the subject of cybernetics. One of them makes clear the connection between this topic and his reference to an automaton in the first part of the "Meridian" speech. From it one realizes that the automaton he refers to in Büchner's *Leonce and Lena* is for him a representation of most modern poetic art. In Celan's view this type of "art is artificial, artifice, synthetic, manufactured: it is the grating sound of the automaton that is alien to humans and creatures: here it is already cybernetics, a marionette programmed to respond" (Kunst, das ist das Künstliche, Erkünstelte, Synthetische, Hergestellte: es ist das menschen- und kreaturferne Knarren der Automaten: es ist, schon hier, Kybernetik, auf Empfang eingestellte Marionette, *DM* 124). Celan means all type of poetic "art" grounded in the widely held modernist view that poems are "assembled" or "manufactured" from words, topoi, metaphors, stock rhetorical devices, or "word material." For him, this made poetic art little more than artifice, something artificial or synthetic, like a constructed automaton that appears to be human but where no human subject is present. His distinction between authentic poetic art and much modernist poetry that he considered to be artifice and artificial derives largely from the kind of rarified poetry spoken of by Mallarmé as the "absolute poem," in which the human subject all but disappears behind what is primarily a word construct. By extension, Celan's complaint also takes issue with another concept borrowed from Mallarmé, repeated in Benn's 1950 credo entitled "Problems of Lyric Poetry," and shared by many moderns, namely that "poems are made of words," that is, that poems are word creations made from "word material."[11]

These responses are more than disagreements with the modernist poetic tradition since Mallarmé. They also reflect Celan's specific hostility toward the practitioners and theorists of contemporary concrete poetry in Germany and Europe. Knowing their work and their philosophy well, he was outraged by their approach to language and by their acceptance among serious critics. In a letter to Bender in May 1960 he expressed his disdain for these extreme experimentalists, who saw language as "word material" to be manipulated spatially, semantically, and lexically to create previously unknown arrangements and constellations (two well-known examples are Eugen Gomringer's "Silence" and Reinhard Döhl's "Apple"). In his letter Celan spoke contemptuously of their "experimenting around with so-called word-material on every lyric street corner" (an jeder lyrischen Straßenecke, das Herumexperimentieren mit dem sogenannten Wortmaterial, *GW* 3:177).

Another example of this shared concern with authentic language that aligned him with Heidegger occurs in his discussion of *Danton's Death*. Throughout Büchner's play revolutionaries indulge in debates using heavy literary and historical rhetoric that, Celan seems to imply, drowns out the authentic voice of the individual.[12] When, at the end, Lucile suddenly shouts, "Long live the king," thereby forfeiting her life, it is, he claims, the "counterword," an "act of freedom" proclaiming "the majesty of the absurd"[13] (das Gegenwort . . , ein Akt der Freiheit . . [die] Majestät des Absurden, *GW* 3:189–190). In Heideggerian terms, the "counterword" is an authentic word spoken in opposition to the empty rhetoric and poetizing of the revolutionaries. Such an expression, Celan claims, represents "poetry." Though using a sharper, more radical, focus than Heidegger's formulations on authentic language, it nevertheless resembles the general distinction he found while reading *Being and Time* between authentic discourse (Rede) and idle talk (Gerede) in an age when both men agreed that the latter threatened to destroy the former.[14] In summary, both were closely allied in their concerns over the decline of authentic, primordial language use in poetry, the ascendancy of information theory that reduced words to bearers of messages, and the widespread manipulation and production of words or "word material" in the poetry of their age.

The "Site" of the Poem

After finding in Lucile's counterword a representation of what might be called authentic or primordial poetry (although this counterword also includes an element of political resistance absent from Heidegger), Celan uses a term modeled on Heidegger in which he describes his continuing quest for true po-

etry, as opposed to art as artifice: "I seek Lenz himself . . . I seek his form: for the sake of the site of poetry, . . . [for the sake of] setting free"[15] (ich suche Lenz selbst . . . ich suche seine Gestalt: um des Ortes der Dichtung, um der Freisetzung . . . willen, *GW* 3:194).

The curious term *site* or *locus* "[Ort] of poetry," already found in his notes on "The Meridian," almost surely has its origin in a passage Celan marked while reading Heidegger's *The Principle of Reason* in 1957. There the thinker speaks of searching for the "site of the principle of reason" (den Ort des Satzes vom Grund, *G* 10:87–88), an abstraction that Heidegger derives from the connection between the German *Ort* (site, place) and its root in the word *erörtern* (to discuss). Similar to Heidegger, Celan's analogous formulation employs a spatial term to refer to an apparently perceptible but elusive "site" of something fundamental, the place where the true poem occurs or is realized: "The poem . . . also seeks this site" (Das Gedicht sucht . . . auch diesen Ort, *G* 3:199). In a radio essay on the poetry of Ossip Mandelstam he delivered earlier the same year that was published along with other notes for his "Meridian" speech, Celan claims this site is not indeterminate but is situated here below, among humans: "The site of the poem is a human site, a 'site in the universe,' to be sure, but here, here below, in temporality" (Der Ort des Gedichts ist ein menschlicher Ort, "ein Ort im All," gewiss, aber hier, hier unten, in der Zeit, *DM* 215).

In his search for the essential "site" of the true poem, this word, which he uses six more times in the course of the speech, also ignites associations with the Greek word for "site" or "place": *topos*. In pursuing and querying these, Celan finally ends in a "no-place" or "u-topia" as the site of the poem, which can be read both positively and negatively. It is difficult to know how many of these associations were borrowed from or responded to Heidegger, who also played with the Greek words *topos* and *utopia*, but from the poet's clear imitation and variation of his original concept, it appears that their dialogue was still relatively concordant. But as his speech progressed, this was about to change. The departure becomes noticeable when Celan sets out to restore the subject to modern poetry,[16] a subject that in Heidegger's writings had come to play an almost nonexistent role, despite his earlier fascination with the person and the persona of Hölderlin.

Shared Views and Rising Differences: A Poet's Presence in the Poem and the Presence of an "Other"

In Celan's view, Mallarmé's ideas about the "absolute poem," which were echoed and followed by Benn and others in the twentieth century, radically re-

duced, if not eliminated, the author as the creator of the poem. Celan rejects this notion out of hand: "The absolute poem—no, that certainly doesn't exist, can't exist" (Das absolute Gedicht—nein, das gibt es gewiss nicht, das kann es nicht geben, *GW* 3:199).[17] From his perspective, this type of poem that effaces all human presence is "self-forgetting" poetic art that leads to "distance from the I" (Ich-Ferne, *GW* 3:193). This in turn results in the "automaton" that represents poetic art without humanity. Reversing Mercier's call to "enlarge art," he urges a listener: "go with art into your very selfmost straits. And set yourself free!" (geh mit der Kunst in deine allereigenste Enge. Und setze dich frei! *GW* 3:200). But the liberation of true poetry from poetic art that lacks humanity requires another element—a human voice. And here Heidegger again enters the dialogue.

In "The Meridian" Celan's theoretical emphasis on a person's presence in the poem first surfaces when he describes how Lenz journeyed through the mountains on January 20. He did not go, Celan says, as "the artist, one concerned with questions of art, [but] as an I" (nicht der Künstler und mit Fragen der Kunst Beschäftigte, er als ein Ich," *GW* 3:194). After asking if this "I" might not follow paths other than "art," he raises a radical question and implies a positive answer. Is it possible "that every poem has its '20th of January' inscribed [in it]?" (dass jedem Gedicht sein "20. Jänner" eingeschrieben bleibt? *GW* 3:196). In Büchner's story this date, which for Celan meant a seminal experience or decisive point in one's life, was the first portrayal of Lenz in his state of mental illness. For Celan it marked the date of the infamous Wannsee Conference in January 1942, when the Final Solution that took his parents and extended family was formally decided and planned. What he finds new in poems that are written today, by which he means his own, is this reflection of personal data or dates in them (the German "Daten" has both meanings), "that here the attempt is clearest to remain mindful of such dates/data. But don't we all inscribe ourselves from such dates/data? And what dates/data do we ascribe ourselves to?" (dass hier am deutlichsten versucht wird, solcher Daten eingedenkt zu bleiben? Aber schreiben wir uns nicht alle von solchen Daten her? Und welche Daten schreiben wir uns zu? *GW* 3:196). He argues that in the true, rather than the "artistic" or artificial poem, a human presence grounded in specific, decisive experiences shows itself. By way of elaboration Celan would write elsewhere, "The presence of a poem is the presence of a person" (Die Gegenwart eines Gedichts ist die Gegenwart einer Person, *DM* 113).

In light of these claims it is surprising that in the next sentence of the *Meridian* he seems to buy into an opposing view by Heidegger: "Yet the poem speaks" (Aber das Gedicht spricht ja! *GW* 3:196), an obvious analogue to Heidegger's fa-

mous statement that in a poem "language speaks" (die Sprache spricht) and not the author. In his 1950 essay "Language," which appeared in 1959 in *On the Way to Language,* Heidegger made this claim about the author of a single poem: "Georg Trakl wrote this poem. That he is the author is unimportant here, just as it is in every other truly successful case of a poem. That which is truly successful exists in fact by being able to deny the name and person of the poet" (Das Gedicht hat Georg Trakl gedichtet. Dass er der Dichter ist, bleibt unwichtig; hier, wie bei jedem anderen großgeglückten Fall eines Gedichtes. Das Großgeglückte besteht sogar mit darin, dass es Person und Namen des Dichters verleugnen kann, *G* 12:15). Heidegger then proceeds to interpret it with the programmatic statement that in this and other poems it is not the author who speaks—it is "language [that] speaks" (die Sprache spricht).

Celan's analogous phrase about the poem itself speaking seems to agree, until one reads the next sentence, where he qualifies his apparent assent by saying that in fact, the poem "remains mindful of its dates, yet—it speaks. Indeed, it speaks only on its own, very own behalf" (Es bleibt seiner Daten eingedenkt, aber—es spricht. Gewiss, es spricht immer nur in seiner eigenen, allereigensten Sache, *GW* 3:196). With this move Celan seems to retain Heidegger's notion of the "speaking to us" of language, at the same time insisting that a human with his or her "dates" or "data" is also speaking in the poem. He extends this idea later by stating that the poem is in fact lonely (einsam) but that whoever writes it remains part of it (Wer es schreibt, bleibt ihm mitgegeben, *GW* 3:198). From this fusion of Heidegger's essentially modernist position on the aesthetics of poetry with his own viewpoint, Celan goes on to develop another fundamental difference that would set him apart from the thinker.

The poem, he insists, also speaks on behalf of an Other, perhaps a "*wholly Other*" (eines *ganz Anderen, GW* 3:196) and "makes straight for that 'Other' which it considers to be attainable, free-able, perhaps unoccupied and thus turned—let's say, like Lucile—toward it, toward the poem" (hält unentwegt auf jenes "Andere" zu, das es sich als erreichbar, als freizusetzen, als vakant vielleicht, und dabei ihm, dem Gedicht-sagen wir: wie Lucile-zugewandt denkt, *GW* 3:197). Heidegger himself had used the term for "the Other" throughout his writings, but the moment Celan speaks of the "wholly Other," he points to its origin in the theological writings of Rudolf Otto or Martin Buber, both of whom he had read.[18] With this assertion about the poem's seeking an encounter with an Other, his implicit dialogue with Heidegger takes a different path. Suddenly the poem can no longer be described as a monologue, though according to Heidegger and others like Benn, that was its essential nature.

Before developing that idea, however, Celan quickly moves on to speak of the true poem's "strong inclination toward falling silent" (starke Neigung zum Verstummen, *GW* 3:197), as well as the way it asserts itself in order to hold on, how it "ceaselessly calls and hauls itself back . . . from its now-no-longer into its still-now" (es ruft und holt sich . . . unausgesetzt aus seinem Schon-nicht-mehr in sein Immer-noch zurück, *GW* 3:197). Here he seems to model his vocabulary on Heidegger's proclivity to use hyphenated compounds for time-space designations, such as one he read in *What Is Called Thinking:* "Out of the 'not-yet "now"' into the 'no-longer "now"'" (Aus dem "noch nicht 'jetzt'" in das "nicht mehr 'jetzt,'" *G* 8:100).

In speaking of the "still-now," a condition or time in which the poem calls into presence language that is on the verge of being lost in silence, Celan cites one of Heidegger's most famous terms to define what he means—the term *response* (das Entsprechen): "But this still-now can only be an act of speaking. Therefore not language generally, and probably also not deriving just from the word 'response'" (Dieses Immer-noch kann doch wohl nur ein Sprechen sein. Also nicht Sprache schlechthin, und vermutlich auch nicht erst vom Wort her "Entsprechung," *GW* 3:197).

Responding to and Modifying Heidegger's Concept of "Response"

In the published version of the "Meridian" speech Celan sets the word *response* in quotation marks as he had done in all his earlier working notes, again signaling that he is still citing someone. As shown above, he had found it throughout Heidegger's writings, though he writes it here as "Entsprechung" rather than using Heidegger's spelling "Entsprechen." The sense in which he cites it, however, clearly refers to Heidegger's original meaning outlined in chapter 10.

Though he modifies it, Celan retains at least part of this idea, since it is an integral element in the "speaking-to-us" of language, which is still close to his thinking. In the citation above on "response," this and the concept of "language generally" (Sprache schlechthin)—a circumlocution for Heidegger's generic word *language,* meaning primordial language—suggest that in his thinking, both concepts are still at work in a poem. But they do not go far enough, since they do not accommodate a human presence in the poem or describe the kind of language used, which he now calls "actualized language," probably meaning language connected to and responding to what is current or of immediate human concern. Yet echoes of Heidegger's thinking are still audible, for this actualized

language still seems to function almost autonomously, that is independent of poetic will or intention. Celan claims it is "set free under the sign of . . . radical individuation . . . but at the same time mindful of the limits set for it by language, the possibilities opened to it by language" (freigesetzt unter dem Zeichen einer zwar radikalen . . . aber gleichzeitig auch der ihr von der Sprache gezogenen Grenzen, der ihr von der Sprache erschlossenen Möglichkeiten eingedenkt bleibenden Individuation, *GW* 3:197).

The difference between this and Heidegger's "response" is the presence of "radical individuation" in the language of the poem. It reflects the poet's own Dasein, the perspective of someone "who does not forget that he speaks from the angle of inclination of his Dasein, the angle of inclination of his creatureliness" (der nicht vergisst, dass er unter dem Neigungswinkel seines Daseins, dem Neigungswinkel seiner Kreatürlichkeit spricht, *GW* 3:197). Ironically, Celan here uses Heidegger's own language to help distinguish his ideas from the thinker's, for he had read the term for *radical individuation* in a passage he marked in *Being and Time* a few years earlier (see chapter 10). Now he uses it in a literal sense to mean the presence of a subject in a poem.

While reinforcing this claim, in its last two words the next sentence also seems to cite, or at least to refer to, Heidegger but in a way that contradicts him: "Then a poem could be . . . the language-become-form of an individual, and, according to its inmost essence, presentness and presence" (Dann wäre das Gedicht . . . gestaltgewordene Sprache eines Einzelnen, und seinem innersten Wesen nach Gegenwart und Präsenz, *GW* 3:197–198). The words *presentness* and *presence* are vintage Heidegger, and Celan may be echoing him intentionally. Without trying to duplicate the thinker's meanings, however, he is probably using them to underscore a point he made earlier in the speech when he says that he feels obliged to place the "acute [accent] of the present" (der Akut des Heutigen, *GW* 3:190) above his remarks on poetry, meaning that he views them as products of a poet whose poem is "standing in the present," that is, a poem speaking in and out of the present.

The Poem Is Solitary and Underway: Further Divergence from Heidegger

When Celan claims that the poem is "solitary and underway" (einsam und unterwegs, *GW* 3:198), he again appropriates two trademark Heideggerian concepts describing the condition of the poem. Predictably, in appropriating them, he also modifies them to fit his thinking.

Drawing on Heidegger in his Bremen speech, Celan had insisted that poems are "on the way" (unterwegs) toward something or someone, a message in a bottle that implies a dialogue because it is intended for a recipient. His notes for "The Meridian" repeatedly pick up this phrase as he clarifies that the poem is "on the way" to someone, to an encounter with this Other. And the "Meridian" speech makes it explicit that the poem is "on the way" not only to this encounter but to a conversation with an Other. It is in this context that Celan also uses the word *solitary*. In Heidegger's usage this word, also translated as "lonely," often refers to man's existential condition. But his essay "The Way to Language" in his book *On the Way to Language* also plays on other meanings of the word: "it is language *alone* that speaks authentically, and it speaks *in solitude*" (Die Sprache *allein* ist es, die eigentlich spricht. Und sie spricht *einsam*, *G* 12:254). On this point Celan could concur only with reservations. Though he agrees that the poem exists in solitude, he goes on to imply that it seeks an Other precisely because it is alone, a move Heidegger never makes. The implications of this position would lead to decisive differences between the two men over the nature of language and poetry.

The Poem as Monologue or Dialogue? A Parting of the Ways

In his 1959 lecture on language that he delivered in the same series with Buber, and that Celan read the next year in an inscribed copy he received from the author, Heidegger begins with a citation from Novalis on the monologic nature of language that had since become an article of faith in modernist poetry: "the mystery of language: it speaks solely and in solitude to itself" (das Geheimnis der Sprache: Sie spricht einzig und einsam mit sich selber, *G* 12:241). When Celan claims in his "Meridian" speech that a poem, the purest form of language, exists *"in the mystery of an encounter"* (*im Geheimnis der Begegnung*, *GW* 3:198), his claim appears to be formulated as a direct contradiction of Heidegger's earlier statement. With it, he summarizes succinctly what may be the single most significant difference in their views.

In his writings Heidegger repeatedly uses the terms *dialogue* (Dialog) and *conversation* (Gespräch). But these terms usually do not refer to two people talking with each other in the everyday sense. It is rather an exchange on a more abstract level. In the introduction to *Explications of Hölderlin's Poetry* as he designates the work as "the conversation of [a mode of] thinking with [a mode of] poetry" (das Gespräch eines Denkens mit einem Dichten, *G* 4:7). Elsewhere he asserts that "everyone is in each instance in a conversation with his forebears, and perhaps even more and in a hidden manner with his descendants" (Jeder ist

jedesmal im Gespräch mit seinen Vorfahren, mehr noch vielleicht und verborgener mit seinen Nachkommen, *G* 12:117). Repeatedly he speaks of a conversation (Gespräch) between poets and thinkers, of poets with other poets, of later thinkers with earlier thinkers, and so forth. But his writings do not deal with language as a dialogue between two persons. In his later works his primary focus is on primordial language and not on how people use it when they are conversing with each other. After reading Heidegger's 1959 lecture, "The Way to Language," Celan had no illusions about the thinker's position on this matter, for there Heidegger had stated that "language *is* monologue" (die Sprache *ist* Monolog, *G* 12:254).

Regarding this major difference, the poet does not cite or allude to Heidegger's thinking as directly as he did with the concept of "response." Instead he outlines an autonomous position that begins with the assertion that the poem stands in "the mystery of an encounter" with an Other (das Geheimnis der Begegnung, *GW* 3:198), a concept absent from Heidegger's thought. And in rejecting unequivocally Heidegger's view on language as monologue, he further states that the poem

> becomes a conversation—often it is a despairing conversation. What is addressed constitutes itself in the space of this conversation, gathers around the I that addresses and names it. But what's addressed and has now become a Thou, through naming, as it were, also brings its Otherness into this presence.
>
> [es wird Gespräch—oft ist es verzweifeltes Gespräch. Erst im Raum dieses Gesprächs konstituiert sich das Angesprochene, versammelt es sich um das es ansprechende und nennende Ich. Aber in diese Gegenwart bringt das Angesprochene und durch Nennung gleichsam zum Du Gewordene auch sein Anderssein mit.] (*GW* 3:198)

With this and related statements Celan dissociates himself from Heidegger's view of poetry and language in which a Thou—only faintly present if noticeable at all—plays no significant role. He stakes out a position much closer to that taken by Buber the previous year in his lecture series with Heidegger about the essentially dialogic nature of language. Nor does he attempt to modify Heidegger's views or integrate them with his own as he did in other parts of "The Meridian." Here there is no attempt at synthesis, no reconciliation of views. For Celan poetry represents "paths of a voice to a perceiving Thou" (Wege einer Stimme zu einem wahrnehmenden Du, *GW* 3:201), a connection of two persons joined by a single "meridian." A monologue that excludes this human Other is not true poetry—only artifice and artificiality.

Conclusion

Other traces of Heidegger also turn up in the "Meridian" speech's highly concentrated distillation of language and thought. Each of the two times Celan uses the term *Dasein,* for example, a reader after the mid-twentieth century cannot get around the dominant sense of this designation for human existence as it had been determined by Heidegger. Whether or not one can speak of direct "influence," of affinity of thought and style, or of borrowing, Celan's description of poems as "sketches of Dasein" (Daseinsentwürfe, *GW* 3:201) sounds almost as if it originated with Heidegger. The same could be said of his term *ways* or *paths* (Wege) and the German term for "detours" (Umwege, *GW* 3:201) derived from it. These are common Heideggerian words. And his reference to coming into proximity with "something open and free" (in die Nähe eines Offenen und Freien, *GW* 3:200) also sounds like something straight out of Heidegger. Gellhaus suggests further that Celan might have found the specialized and rarely used word *verhoffen* (*GW* 3:197), meaning to scent or catch wind of something, in Heidegger's *Lectures and Essays.*[19] And his paradoxical definition of poetry as "this endless [infinite] speaking of nothing but mortality and gratuitousness" (diese Unendlichsprechung von lauter Sterblichkeit und Umsonst, *GW* 3:200) might be construed as an answer to Heidegger and the refusal of modernist poets to see great poems as timeless or enduring. In his Bremen speech Celan agreed that "the poem is not timeless," but he also maintained that it "lays claim to infinity, it seeks to reach through time—through it, not above and beyond it" (es erhebt einen Unendlichkeitsanspruch, es sucht, durch die Zeit hindurchzugreifen—durch sie hindurch, nicht über sie hinweg, *GW* 3:186). Now he seems to suggest that from human existence marked by the distinctly unenduring qualities of mortality and gratuitousness, an enduring poem that "reaches through time" might emerge.

If his "Meridian" speech is taken as an implicit dialogue with Heidegger, it must be remembered that, like much of what had preceded it, only one of the two parties was speaking, and his vis-à-vis had no chance to respond immediately. The opportunity for Heidegger to participate in the other half of this dialogue on the "Meridian" speech came eighteen months later. Before it did, Celan would enter into the darkest time in his life to that point. Yet even in his deepest distress he maintained some contact with the thinker whose works had helped push him into writing his own original phenomenology of literature that both responded to and rejected parts of a dialogue that had been ongoing for almost a decade.

Descending into "The Loneliest Loneliness," 1960–1961

Early in May 1960, a few days before he learned he was to receive the Büchner Prize later that year, Celan also became aware of a letter written by Claire Goll that had been published recently in an obscure Munich literary magazine.[1] In it she revived the plagiarism charges that she had first leveled at him in 1953 and had continued to repeat sporadically over the following seven years. Though they began to exact a heavy psychic toll on him when he first learned of them in 1954, most critics and editors who received Goll's occasional missives dismissed them as obviously groundless, and friends with whom Celan shared his dismay at what he saw as intentional character assassination supported him with advice and encouragement as to how to proceed.[2] But new aspects of the May 1960 letter raised the stakes beyond Celan's capacity to cope. In addition to charging him with plagiarism, Goll for the first time referred to the "legend" of his parents' death at the hands of the Nazis, thereby calling him a liar regarding the most painful experience of his life. Further, a few sensationalist journalists and critics who decided in 1960 to turn Goll's most recent accusations into a major scandal caused the issue to erupt like a bombshell on the national literary scene.

In light of the recent resurgence of neo-Nazism in West Germany and Western Europe generally, and because Celan knew that some current German critics were ex-Nazis, he came to view the furor as the beginning of an anti-Semitic defamation campaign against him carried out by ex-Nazis and their sympathizers. In the course of the next several years the scandal became an obsession that severely disturbed him and helped transform his ever-present suspicion, hypersensitivity, and antipathy toward Germans and criticism of his poetry by German critics into full-blown mental illness. In one example of how these events destabilized him mentally, Pöggeler remembers Celan's sitting with him in total silence for thirty minutes in a train compartment in early summer 1960 before

suddenly announcing that Washington and Moscow were on the phone conspiring about how they might eliminate him.[3]

Details of the charges, and the overwhelming support of writers, literary critics, and academicians who came to his defense and tried to exonerate him, have been compiled by Barbara Wiedemann.[4] Remarkably, Celan managed to keep overt references to this groundless attack on his person and his poetry, which intensified between the publication of Clair Goll's letter in May and the delivery of his "Meridian" speech on October 22, 1960, out of the final text he delivered, though a few traces remained that were not obvious to his audience or even to later readers.[5] But as he gradually descended into the loneliness of mental illness in the months following this public address, associations with his closest friends, with prominent writers who supported him, and with figures whom he greatly admired deteriorated rapidly.

Between 1961 and 1963 the effects of Goll's attack so preoccupied him that he spoke of little else, whether in person, in phone calls, or in letters. During this time he gradually broke off friendships, sometimes acrimoniously, with his closest friends from his days in Vienna—Ingeborg Bachmann, Klaus Demus, Reinhard Federmann, and Milo Dor. He also strained or ruptured relations with sympathetic literary friends or supporters in Germany and Switzerland, among them Hanne and Hermann Lenz, Marie Luise Kaschnitz, Alfred Andersch, Rolf Schroers, Paul Schallück, Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll, Max Frisch, and Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Wiedemann describes how difficult he made it for them, since, as she points out, he wanted their support but did not want them to say anything to defend him for fear it might be used against him.[6] When they did come to his defense, he often misconstrued their attempts to help him and accused them of consorting with his enemies. When they did not, he believed they were lending aid to his enemies by their silence, or he blamed them for not agreeing that he was under attack on all sides by anti-Semites.[7]

Initially Celan helped Demus draft a rebuttal to Goll's plagiarism charges. It was published in the prestigious national journal *Die Neue Rundschau,* with Bachmann and Kaschnitz as cosignatories.[8] By the time it appeared, however, he was unhappy with these close friends because he believed they had dignified the charges by even addressing the possibility of his having plagiarized.[9] He finally broke with Demus when his friend, who recognized how acute his condition had become, told Celan in a letter that the poet was ill.[10] Hanne and Hermann Lenz had to defend themselves against his accusations that they were in league with his enemies,[11] and Nelly Sachs's conciliatory attitude toward Germans, whom Celan could not forgive, also put a strain on that relationship,[12] since he believed

that there should be no reconciliation with Germans in light of what he considered to be ubiquitous anti-Semitism in West Germany that continued to fuel Goll's attack on him. His unalloyed hostility toward most Germans also found expression in highly agitated letters of the period[13] and in the motto to a poem Celan wrote in February 1961. Originally entitled "A German Song, Sung by Paul Celan" (later changed to the self-ironic "A Rogue's and Swindler's Ditty"), Celan preceded it with a line from Heinrich Heine's poem "To Edom" in which Heine used *Edom* as an easily decipherable code word for Germany.

A letter of March 9, 1962, to his longtime friend and mentor in Bucharest, Alfred Margul-Sperber, illustrates how severely ill he was becoming. After lamenting his growing isolation, he made the paranoid claim that the Büchner Prize was awarded him only to supply his enemies with an alibi to continue their ongoing character-defamation campaign.[14] Against this larger backdrop one would expect that his relationship to Heidegger, a well-known Nazi and a representative of everything German that Celan now found threatening, would have deteriorated or ended as his mental health declined. Yet like so much else in their complex relationship, the fact that it did not happen at this time seems to defy logic.

Guilt by Association: Buber and Heidegger

Symptomatic of Celan's behavior and his state of mind, and an ominous foreshadowing of his 1967 meeting with Heidegger, was an encounter with Martin Buber on September 14, 1960, in Paris. A great admirer of the Jewish thinker, Celan began reading him in 1944.[15] As evidence of his reverence for Buber, who, despite living in Israel, was probably the most prominent and articulate spokesman for Judaism in postwar Germany, Celan's posthumous library contains at least eighteen books by him and three about him, including Hans Kohn's tome of nearly four hundred pages, most of which are well marked. When Celan referred to Buber by name in his 1958 Bremen speech, it was both a tribute to him and a reference to their common geographical and spiritual Jewish origins. As one lifelong friend put it, Celan "venerated Martin Buber to the point of rapture."[16]

In his 1959 lecture series with Heidegger on the topic of language, Buber's title was "The Word That Is Spoken." Knowing Heidegger's works intimately, he used that thinker's own concepts and diction to stand his ideas about language as monologue on their head. He maintained that the language of poetry and thought is essentially a spoken phenomenon, that spoken language by its nature

addresses another respondent or respondents, and that consequently it is dialogic in its core.[17] In so doing, he staked out a position on language and poetry close to what Celan would espouse in his "Meridian" speech the next year. Furthermore, he pointed to the site of spoken language, which he called the "In-Between" (das Inzwischen) that exists between speakers, a concept that in some ways resembled Celan's reference to the "site of poetry" (Ort der Dichtung) mentioned in his "Meridian" speech.[18]

Since the affinities of thought in Buber's lecture affirmed some of Celan's fundamental views on language, one might have expected him to applaud this Jewish thinker whom he admired so much already. But a personal consideration intervened that soured him, temporarily at least, on Buber and turned their 1960 meeting in Paris into a major disappointment. Indirectly it involved Heidegger. Despite Celan's correspondence and ongoing contact with Heidegger, despite the books he had received from him, and despite what he had learned from the thinker's works, including strong affirmation of his own role as a poet, Celan could not remove Heidegger's Nazi past from his mind. When he learned of the 1959 lecture series between these two figures who had played such a role in his thinking about poetry, it seems he expected Buber to act as an agent for all victims and survivors of the Holocaust and to have Heidegger publicly answer for his actions between 1933 and 1945. No doubt he knew of Buber's widely recognized work in striving for German-Jewish rapprochement in postwar Germany, but in his present frame of mind he viewed reconciliation in any form as a sell-out, and he wanted nothing to do with it. Instead he had wanted Buber to call Heidegger to accountability. By participating in the same lecture series and appearing together in public with Heidegger, Buber not only failed to meet these expectations, of which he knew nothing, but in Celan's eyes he gave a tacit stamp of approval to Heidegger's Nazi past.[19]

Inevitably, these expectations led to a disappointing encounter when he first met the eighty-two-year-old Buber in Paris. On the evening of September 13, 1960, the poet dropped off at Buber's hotel copies of two volumes of his poetry *(Poppy and Memory* and *From Threshold to Threshold)* and his translations of selected poems by Mandelstam.[20] When they met the next day, Buber presented him with an inscribed copy of his book *I and Thou* dated the previous evening, which suggests that he wrote his dedication soon after receiving Celan's gift. From his readings in Buber that earlier had spoken to his soul and helped reawaken his Jewish identity, one can assume that Celan, in his current embattled state of mind, had gone expecting to find comfort and perhaps support from this kindred Jewish spirit.

According to a secondhand account by Jean Bollack, he not only expressed his respect and admiration for this patriarchal figure, but he even knelt and asked Buber for a blessing. Citing Bollack, from whom he heard a summary of the encounter, Felstiner describes the essence of the conversation: "How had it felt (Celan wanted to know), after the catastrophe, to go on writing in German and publishing in Germany? Buber evidently demurred, saying it was natural to publish there and taking a pardoning stance toward Germany. Celan's vital need, to hear some echo of his plight, Buber could not or would not grasp. This encounter, or failed encounter, left the poet even more vulnerable."[21] Clearly they had not "connected," and Demus claims Celan told him that both he and Buber came away disappointed.[22] Given his reputation for decorous behavior in public, Celan in all likelihood mentioned nothing about his belief that Buber had betrayed him and other Jews by his attempts to promote German-Jewish reconciliation or about Buber's failure to confront Heidegger regarding his past. For Celan such burning issues would be divined immediately by a vis-à-vis who was in tune with his thinking, which Buber clearly was not. The resulting disappointment only added to the growing isolation into which his declining mental health was carrying him. It also prompted him somewhat later—probably on a visit Demus made to Paris in late February/early March 1962—to give his friend the autographed copy of *I and Thou* he had received from Buber. After his disappointment it seems he did not want to keep it any more.[23]

Celan Reacts to Heidegger's *Nietzsche*

Against this backdrop of Celan's distrust, suspicion, and descent into the night of mental illness, Heidegger once again entered the poet's life in a way that reflected how much Celan was still in the thinker's thrall. German newspapers and magazines had been filled with stories of Goll's accusations and attempts from all sides to defend Celan, and Heidegger could not have been unaware of them. In August 1961, eleven months after the poet's failed encounter with Buber in which Heidegger himself had played an indirect but unwitting role, the German thinker sent Celan what appears to have been a token of his encouragement and support—a copy of his recently published two-volume work on Nietzsche, the first time his complete lectures on Nietzsche from the years 1936 to 1942 had appeared in print. Heidegger's handwritten dedication read, "For Paul Celan with cordial greetings. Tübingen, August 1961" (Für Paul Celan, mit herzlichen Grüßen. Tübingen, August, 1961). Given Celan's fragile mental state, and in light of his recent condemnation of Buber for his failure to confront Heidegger with his past, the poet's re-

action seemed to defy logic. Instead of ignoring or rejecting it, Celan immediately immersed himself in more than eleven hundred pages of text and recorded finishing at least the first three hundred pages by August 31.[24] Other markings suggest that he read a significant portion of the entire two volumes.

From them, one might conclude that Nietzsche interested him as much as Heidegger did. Among other things, the thinker acted here as a purveyor of citations from or aspects of Nietzsche's thought that he found appealing and now might have seen in a new light. Most of the markings focus on passages from *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and *The Will to Power*, as the latter work was then known. It is as if Celan sensed that *Zarathustra* was the last work Nietzsche completed before the onset of his severe mental illness and that *The Will to Power*, never a coherent work but an editor's collection of aphorisms and observations, was written for the most part after his illness had begun.

With the instinct of someone in crisis who is drawn to a kindred suffering spirit, Celan homed in on statements by Nietzsche that might have applied to his own mental state. Though he regularly personalized the works and biographies of other writers and related them to his own life, he now intensified this search for affinities. Using the concept of the "meridian" that he heard from Nelly Sachs in 1959 as a designation for spiritual coordinate points connecting like-minded people,[25] he wrote a letter to Pöggeler on August 30, 1961, stating that he had discovered something "meridian-like" in his soul-mate Mandelstam, namely that he, too, suffered from groundless accusations of plagiarism. In a second letter to Pöggeler written later the same day, and based on further readings in Heidegger's work, he added Nietzsche to those he had discovered as existing on the same meridian:

> Again something meridian-like, after I posted my letter to you. On p. 292 of Martin Heidegger's Nietzsche book I find this word by Zarathustra: "Not only one sun had gone down for me." [And] how true the thoughts on pp. 300 and 301 about the "loneliest loneliness." Do you remember my little "Conversation in the Mountains?" And the passage in "Meridian" where I recall the encounter that I missed—not by chance—in Engadin, i.e. in Sils-Maria? There at the beginning it reads: "The sun, and not only it, had gone down."
>
> [Etwas Meridianhaftes, wieder, nachdem ich meinen Brief an Sie abgeschickt habe: Auf S. 292 des Nietzsche-Buches von Martin Heidegger finde ich dieses Zarathustra-Wort: "Nicht nur eine Sonne war mir untergegangen." Wie wahr, auf S. 300 und 301, die Gedanken über die "einsamste Einsamkeit!" Erinnern Sie sich an mein kleines "Gespräch im Gebirg?" Und an die Stelle im "Meridian," wo ich

der—nicht von ungefähr—versäumten Begegnung im Engadin, d.i. In Sils-Maria gedenke? Da heißt es, zu Beginn: "Die Sonne, und nicht nur sie, war untergegangen."][26]

In this letter Celan describes two points he discovered on the meridian that in his mind connected him to Nietzsche. The first, a trope similar in image and style, occurs in the opening line of his prose piece "Conversation in the Mountains" (*GW* 3:169). Its words almost duplicate those cited by Heidegger (*G* 6.1:259) from Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*,[27] though he either did not know it or had not remembered the similarity when he wrote his prose piece in 1959. Each centers on the metaphor of a sun that has gone down, and each suggests unspeakable losses to an individual in a radically changed world where more than his sun has gone down. For Celan this image could have referred to the destruction of his people and culture by the Nazis, though at that moment it could also be seen as a metaphor for his descent into mental illness.

The second point on the common meridian of suffering is Heidegger's statement about the "loneliest loneliness." Although the leitmotif of loneliness permeates *Zarathustra*, it was Heidegger, not Nietzsche, who created this particular turn of speech. He applies it to Zarathustra's eagle and snake, describing how they contribute to their master's condition of "loneliest loneliness" (*G* 6.1:267). In light of Celan's growing isolation—he believed that his persecutors were succeeding in their campaign to destroy him and that his friends were abandoning him—Celan probably saw his own state of mind mirrored in this description of Zarathustra or, by extension, of Nietzsche on the brink of madness. Ironically, he was not resonating here with Nietzsche's own words but with Heidegger's description of Zarathustra's condition at a time when by most calculations he should have written off the thinker as the embodiment of those elements of Germany's unrepentant past that disturbed him most. Once again it seems that resonance with Heidegger's writings won out over resistance to them.

At first glance there appears to be no connection among other sentences by Heidegger that he marked. When read, however, as reflections of his struggle to deal with what for Celan was a growing mental health and existential crisis, they make some sense. They include passages such as these:

But Being has no counterpart. What stands over against Being is nothing, and perhaps even that is still in essence subject to Being and Being alone.[28]

[Das Sein aber hat nicht seinesgleichen. Was gegen das Sein steht, ist das Nichts, und vielleicht ist selbst dieses noch im Wesen dem Sein und nur ihm botmäßig.] (*G* 6.2:224)

> The most intelligible defies all intelligibility.
> [Das Verständlichste widersetzt sich aller Verstehbarkeit.] (*G* 6.2:225)

> And yet—Being offers us no ground and no basis as beings do to which we can turn, on which we can build, and to which we can cling. Being is the rejection of the role of such grounding; it renounces all grounding, is abysmal.
> [Und dennoch—das Sein bietet uns keinen Grund und Boden wie das Seiende, an das wir uns kehren, worauf wir bauen und woran wir uns halten. Das Sein ist die Ab-sage an die Rolle eines solchen Gründens, versagt alles Gründige, ist abgründig.] (*G* 6.2:225)

In a passage where he marked the phrase "Being is both the most utterly void and the most abundant" (Das Sein ist zumal das Leerste und das Reichste, *G* 6.2:226), something prompted Celan to enter a marginal note that reads, "The poem of Being" (Das Gedicht des Seins). And in a passage outlining Schopenhauer's influence on the young Nietzsche, he not only marked the phrase "the basic experiences of the awakening thinker" (die Grunderfahrungen des erwachenden Denkers, *G* 6.2:213); he entered the term *Grunderfahrungen* (basic experiences) in his own hand on the last page of the volume, followed by the page number where he found it. One might surmise that in reading Heidegger on Nietzsche he was thinking about his own "basic experiences" of Being and their ramifications for his existence at the moment.

Celan Sends Heidegger His *Speech-Grille*

On September 15, 1961, within a month of having received the dedicated copy of Heidegger's *Nietzsche,* Celan responded in kind by sending Heidegger a copy of *Speech-Grille,* his volume of poems that appeared in 1959. In it was a handwritten dedication addressed to Heidegger. This inscribed copy is unusual for several reasons, the first of which is that it survived at all in what remained of the thinker's small working library (this "Handbibliothek" was not dispersed after his death as much of his larger library was).[29] Furthermore, as of this writing it is the only volume of poetry in existence that Celan is known to have sent to Heidegger, though he undoubtedly mailed or personally gave him others in response to at least ten dedicated volumes of writings he received from Heidegger between 1956 and 1970.[30] Its presence in Heidegger's remaining library also suggests the importance of Celan's works for Heidegger. After having a stroke in 1970, the thinker selected a limited number of books to take with him when he moved into

a smaller house built for his old age in his garden, among them six volumes of Celan's works he owned, including this one.[31] Further, despite the poet's mental state, the tone of the dedication suggests that in spite of Heidegger's Nazi past, Celan had apparently exempted him from, or at least temporarily suspended, the intense suspicion and antipathy he harbored toward most Germans at this time. Warm in its expression of appreciation and reverence, it reads:

For
Martin Heidegger
with cordial thanks for the
Nietzsche book
with cordial greetings and wishes
in sincere devotion
9.15.61 Paul Celan
[Für
Martin Heidegger
mit herzlichem Dank für das
Nietzsche Buch
mit herzlichen Grüßen und Wünschen
in aufrichtiger Ergebenheit
15.9.61 Paul Celan]

Preceding this dedication, Celan wrote out four lines from his poem "Voices," which apparently he intended as a message to Heidegger, though what that message meant is not readily apparent. They read:

Voices from the nettle path:
Come on your hands to us.
Whoever is alone with the lamp
has only his hand to read from.[32]
[Stimmen vom Nesselweg her:
Komm auf den Händen zu uns.
Wer mit der Lampe allein ist,
hat nur die Hand, draus zu lesen.] (*GW* 1:147)

Clearly these lines were important to Celan, for he had cited them in his "Meridian" speech the previous year, where he claimed that they were "written from my 20th of January" (von meinem 20. Jänner hergeschrieben), meaning a deeply personal, perhaps traumatic experience, and that in them, "I encountered . . . myself" (Ich bin . . . mir selbst begegnet, *GW* 3:201).

The longer poem "Voices" from the volume *Speech-Grille* comprises eight poems, each of which represents a different voice or group of voices speaking. In the sixth, which identifies the speaker as "Jacob's voice," and the seventh, which speaks of "voices in the bowels of the ark," it is clear that the speakers reflect Celan's broader ancestral tradition. In many of his poems, one might say that he accepted these dead as his muse or that, in a variation that approximates what he learned from Heidegger, his poetry reflected Jorge Luis Borges's statement, "The voices of the dead / Will utter me forever."[33] Specifically he saw himself as a conduit for those who had perished in the Holocaust and no longer had a voice of their own. "Voices," with its eight choruses, brings to language these voices of his ancestors and extended family. In Heideggerian terms, their "voices" might be heard as Celan's version of "language speaking to us."

In the specific quatrain he sent to Heidegger, the second among the eight poems, the "nettle path" on one level refers to the prickling or stinging characteristic of certain plants (stinging nettle), a trope not far removed from the suffering suggested by the Christian image of the "path of thorns." These voices of sufferers instruct the speaker to "come on your hands to us." This could be a plea that the poet use his hands, the basic instrument for writing, to articulate their suffering as they were unable to do. In one letter describing his mode of writing Celan uses the metonymic "hands" for the literal creators of poetry. The passage proclaims that "only true hands write true poems" (nur wahre Hände schreiben wahre Gedichte, *GW* 3:177). But the imperative to "come on your hands" also might refer to another image from the "Meridian" speech in which Büchner's Lenz is troubled that he cannot walk on his head because, "whoever walks on his head has heaven as an abyss beneath him" (wer auf dem Kopf geht, der hat den Himmel als Abgrund unter sich, *GW* 3:195). With slight modification, this perception could be construed to mean that whoever walks on his hands also has a heaven that is an abyss. Could the voices be commanding their spokesperson to speak or write from the perspective of a world turned on its head, where what was once heaven has been turned into its opposite—an abyss?

Celan rarely uses the image of a lamp in his poems, so there is a limited comparative basis to establish a denotation, though at the very least it refers here to a means of illumination for reading. But the poet, despite his loneliness in an otherwise darkened world, enjoys this gift of light and has the ability to read (that is, to perceive, to understand, to learn). The voices, of course, do not. But what does he read? He reads his hand, or at least he reads from it, though perhaps not in the common sense of reading a fortune or establishing a lifeline. More probably "reading from the hand" echoes a personal metaphor for writing poetry. The

same voices of muted sufferers who urged him to come to them on his hands now state that he is uniquely positioned to employ those hands for "reading" them—for understanding them as he brings their suffering to language by writing poetry.

What Celan meant in his "Meridian" speech when he claimed that these lines he sent to Heidegger represented a "January 20th" (that is, a defining event in his life), and a "self-encounter," is not entirely clear, though a poem he wrote on May 21, 1961, in direct response to the Goll controversy, sheds some light on it. In a variation on the four-line stanza from "Voices" he now identifies himself as the poet who walks on his hands, as one who is "un-understood":

> He who walked on the hands that
> wrote this: he
> who read the nettle-writing, the Un-
> understood one, only he
> also understands the others.
> [Der auf den Händen ging, die
> dies schrieben: er
> der die Nesselschrift las, der Un-
> verstandene, nur er
> versteht, auch die anderen.][34]

Heidegger, of course, had no way of knowing of this personal identification or how important the original quatrain was to the poet. But Celan assumed, as he often did with his readers, that Heidegger would grasp his intent immediately. Was he trying once again, as he had in 1957 when he wanted to send the poem "Streak" to Heidegger, to convey his role as a wounded survivor and voice for those who did not survive? Or did the onset of mental illness have anything to do with these lines? Was he signaling Heidegger that on self-examination he found himself inadequate to the task of speaking for those without voices? Whatever the answer, this response was his last attempt to keep in touch with Heidegger until they met in person six years later. Deteriorating health and subsequent extended periods of hospitalization and treatment for his illness severely limited his desire or ability to respond.

But for Heidegger it would not be the last attempt to stay in contact. When Celan's "Meridian" speech appeared in the spring of 1961, the thinker quickly acquired a copy on his own. His efforts to understand it and his reactions to it form a separate, and only partially understood, chapter in the two men's sporadic but ongoing relationship.

The Dialogue Continues

Heidegger Reads Celan's "Meridian," 1960–1961

It is not known if Heidegger responded publicly or privately to the controversy surrounding Celan between 1960 and 1962, but he was undoubtedly aware of Celan's receiving the Büchner Prize in 1960 and of his "Meridian" speech. When this brief treatise was published in late March 1961, Pöggeler seized the opportunity to arrange a meeting and discuss it with Heidegger, who ordered an edition of Büchner's works from his book dealer, thinking it would help him understand Celan's speech.[1]

Pöggeler, who had received a printed version in the mail from Celan on April 11, presented Heidegger with a copy of the speech when they met on April 25 and discussed its contents with him over a three-day period.[2] Heidegger's copy, with markings and marginalia he made while working through it with Pöggeler, has been preserved among the editions of Celan's works that Heidegger retained in the small private library mentioned earlier. As one of Heidegger's firsthand responses in his extended dialogue with Celan, it reveals some acceptance, some polite disagreement, perhaps a little puzzlement or uncertainty, and enough ambivalence to make it difficult to draw too many solid conclusions about his reactions to it.

Heidegger's notes and markings bear out what Pöggeler claims were the topics of discussion during their working sessions: Camille's words, "alas, art!"; Lenz's wish to walk on his head, with heaven as an abyss beneath him; and the site of poetry and why it was located on a meridian. But Pöggeler's failure to say anything about other matters, especially the words *breath* and *breathturn,* is surprising, for these are pivotal concepts in Celan's speech and his poetology generally. Heidegger's marginal note next to the word *breathturn,* however, which reads "poems by this title 1967" (Gedichte unter diesem Titel, 1967), not to mention other notes that he appears to have entered with another pen and in a slightly unsteady hand, all lead to the conclusion that he must have worked through

Meridian not only with Pöggeler in 1961 but again sometime after the appearance of Celan's *Breathturn* volume in 1967. Because the combined markings and marginalia represent a comprehensive account of Heidegger's dialogue with this text, for purposes of analysis no distinction will be made between apparently different dates of origin among Heidegger's various entries.

Some responses are ambivalent or puzzling at best. For example, when Celan cites Mercier's imperative to "enlarge art" (Élargissez l'Art! *GW* 3:200), Heidegger made a line in the margin and entered the word "No." Was he disagreeing with the statement itself or with Celan, who in subsequent lines also rejected this notion? Furthermore, he sometimes underlined certain words without commentary. In one case he underscored "sketches of existence" (Daseinsentwürfe) and entered a page number next to it that seems to have had no bearing on the term. One can only guess what he might have been thinking. Not ambivalent in the least, however, are the intensity and attentiveness of his reading, as a brief summary illustrates. In this pamphlet of eighteen printed pages, one counts eleven different marginal lines, four question marks, seventeen underscored words, and eight single or double asterisks in the margin. Further, at twelve different points he entered a total of eighteen page numbers as cross-references to other passages in the speech, suggesting that he was constantly paging back and forth. Finally, he made ten separate marginal comments, several of which explain the single or double asterisks in the text.

Judging by the nature of his comments and markings, Heidegger was not approaching this text as a hostile reader. Instead, one might speak of sympathetic ambivalence, for clearly he was trying to understand the thinking of a poet he admired and respected but whose thinking and poetry were not easily accessible. He gives the impression of laboring to understand Celan's obscure and cryptic statements and to find affinities with his own thought but not always succeeding. When he did not find them readily accessible, he sometimes attempted either to force connections or to reformulate ideas by using his own frame of reference and terminology for what he thought Celan was saying. And although not uncritical in his approach, he reacted diplomatically to obvious references to his own thinking and specific vocabulary items, even though it was evident in some cases that Celan was taking issue with his philosophy of language. Only a few times does he appear to criticize or correct.

"Response," "Renunciation," and the Poem's Temporality

His first note—entered on the cover page—reads, "The temporality of the poem" (die Zeitlichkeit des Gedichts).[3] The referenced pages of Celan's text

speak of how the poem shows a strong tendency toward silence but how "it ceaselessly calls and hauls itself . . . from the now-no-longer back into its still-now" (es ruft und holt sich . . . unausgesetzt aus seinen Schon-nicht-mehr in sein Immernoch zurück, *GW* 3:197). In a passage Heidegger marked with several underlines, question marks, and asterisks, Celan then claims:

> This still-now could be only an act of speaking. Not simply language generally, and probably also not derived from the word "response" either. But actualized language, set free under the sign of radical individuation, which at the same time stays mindful of the limits drawn by language, the possibilities opened by language. This still-now of poems can only be found in a poem by someone who does not forget that he speaks from the angle of inclination of his very Dasein, the angle of inclination of his creatureliness.[4]
>
> [Dieses Immer-noch kann doch wohl nur ein Sprechen sein. Also nicht Sprache schlechthin und vermutlich auch nicht erst vom Wort her "Entsprechung." Sondern aktualisierte Sprache, freigesetzt under dem Zeichen einer zwar radikalen, aber gleichzeitig auch der ihr von der Sprache gezogenen Grenzen, der ihr von der Sprache erschlossenen Möglichkeiten eingedenk bleibenden Individuation. Dieses Immer-Noch des Gedichts kann ja wohl nur in dem Gedicht dessen zu finden sein, der nicht vergisst, dass er unter dem Neigungswinkel seines Daseins, dem Neigungswinkel seiner Kreatürlichkeit spricht.] (*GW* 3:197)

It did not escape Heidegger that Celan had challenged the adequacy of his well-known concept of "response" (Entsprechung) in connection with the origins of poetic language. This probably prompted the asterisk he entered after this term, which he expanded on at the bottom of the page with the handwritten note: "cf. *On the Way to Language*."

More significant, however is the word *renunciation* (ent-sagen), which Heidegger entered (in hyphenated form) in the margin next to the asterisk. It does not emerge as a significant term in Heidegger's vocabulary until his late reflections on the nature of language. As nearly as I can tell, he first uses it in his idiosyncratic way in a series of lectures titled "The Nature of Language" given in December 1957 and February 1958 that were published in 1959 in *On the Way to Language*. In them he appears to use it as an extension of, or replacement for, the word *response* (entsprechen) in the sense of the poet's "renouncing" the word (that is, de-speaking in order that primordial language can speak to or through him). Embedded in this word are the same two elements found in the German *entsprechen*, a root verb that denotes *saying* (sagen), a word that was central to his later thought, and the same *ent-* prefix that negates the sense of that root.

Heidegger appears to be employing this word as a tactful way of disagreeing with Celan's challenge to this fundamental notion in his philosophy of language. In fact, it seems he wants to demonstrate that they agree.

This attempt to find or force a convergence of views is evident from the passage that follows. When Celan's text insists that it is not (or not only) language itself that "speaks" in a poem but the actualized language of an individual speaking from the "angle of inclination of his very Dasein, the angle of inclination of his creatureliness," Heidegger enters double asterisks after the words *Dasein* and *speaks*. Obviously he recognized *Dasein* as his own signature word for the "being-there" of individual existence. The double asterisks he places next to it and to the word *speaks* are explained in a statement at the bottom that seems to insist that his views do not diverge from Celan's. Referring to the relevant sentences, Heidegger asserts, "This is what 'response' means in the 1958 [*sic*] lecture 'Language' and B.[eing] a[nd] T.[ime], § 34" (Dies meint das "entsprechen" i. Vortrag 1958 "Die Sprache" u. S.u.Z § 34). Heidegger seems to be saying that what the poet describes in the passage about radically individualized language is, in fact, what he means with his term *response* or his most recent extension of the term, *renunciation* (entsagen). To make his point, he refers to works more than thirty years apart that reflect his earlier and most recent thinking on the origin of language. The first is *Being and Time* (1927). Since the term *entsprechen* never appears in section 34 of *Being and Time,* Heidegger probably mentions this section only as the basis for his general thoughts on the relationship of Dasein to discourse and language. His second reference takes the reader to the most recent source, though he confuses his titles. Instead of the essay entitled "Language," which appeared in 1950, he clearly means his 1958 essay "The Nature of Language," which appeared in *On the Way to Language* the following year. There he claims that in order to receive and write primordial language, the poet must first renounce a conventional relation to the word: "What the poet learned to renounce is his formerly cherished view regarding the relation of thing and word"[5] (Worauf der Dichter verzichten lernte, ist die vormals von ihm gehegte Meinung über das Verhältnis von Ding und Wort, *G* 12:157). Only through this relinquishing (verzichten) of preconceived notions of language, or through "despeaking," can the word "respond" to him in the sense of the term *entsprechen* or *entsagen:* "The relinquishing that the poet learns is a special type of fulfilled renunciation to which that which has long been concealed and virtually already promised now speaks." (Der Verzicht, den der Dichter lernt, ist von der Art jenes erfüllten Entsagens, dem allein sich das lang Verborgene und eigentlich schon Zugesagte zuspricht, *G* 12:159).

Heidegger, it seems, understood that Celan was rejecting, or at least modifying, his own view of "responding" as a function of the true poet who creates with primordial language, or at least Celan was saying that this word does not go far enough. But the thinker seems determined not to let him disagree, or at least he tries to find common ground. If he would only consider his latest thinking about the term *entsagen,* Heidegger seems to imply, Celan would find that his view of the poet's role in bringing this type of language to speech "corresponds" (in the traditional sense) to Heidegger's own long-held views.

Other passages do not allow for such easy agreement. Heidegger's reference to the "temporality of the poem" that he entered on the cover page first takes the reader to passages on pages 16 and 17 of the version he was reading, followed by a reference to page 21, which is further cross-referenced to page 8. Page 17, which posits the "still now" of the poem, suggests that each poem speaks from an "angle of inclination" of a person who is grounded in the present. Under these circumstances the poem, according to Celan, is "the language-become-form of a single person—and, following its inmost nature, presentness and presence" (*SPP* 409) (gestaltgewordene Sprache eines Einzelnen,—und seinem innersten Wesen nach Gegenwart und Präsenz, *GW* 3:197–198).

Heidegger's cross-reference to page 21 leads to a passage where Celan expands on this idea with another summary statement: "Poetry, ladies and gentlemen—: this speaking endlessly [or infinite speaking] of mere mortality and uselessness!" (*SPP* 411) (Die Dichtung, meine Damen und Herren—: diese Unendlichsprechung von lauter Sterblichkeit und Umsonst! *GW* 3:200). Heidegger cross-references this statement with an entry directing attention to a citation on page 8 (of his version) that reads, "alas, art." There Celan claims that this expression must be read in various ways:

> I'm fully aware we can read this word one way or another, give it differing accents: the acute of the contemporary, the *grave* accent of history (and literary history, too), the circumflex—marking length—of the eternal. I give it—there's no other choice left me—I give it the acute. (*SPP* 403)
>
> [Man kann, ich bin mir dessen durchaus bewusst, dieses Wort so oder so lesen, man kann verschiedene Akzente setzen: den akut des Heutigen, den Gravis des Historischen—auch Literarhistorischen,—den Zirkumflex—ein Dehnungszeichen-des Ewigen. Ich setze—mir bleibt keine andere Wahl—ich setze den Akut.] (*GW* 3:190)

Somehow Celan's assertion that the poem must be grounded in, or read as, an expression of the present unsettled Heidegger, and it is not entirely clear why.

Pöggeler claims Heidegger insisted on the temporality of the poem but that he thought Celan did not.[6] On page 8 Heidegger wrote a question mark next to "the eternal" in the passage above where Celan speaks of (and rejects) the "circumflex" of the eternal. Next to the term, Heidegger entered a cross-reference to page 21. On that page he entered a note immediately following the above passage that suggests discomfort with Celan's statement about "this speaking endlessly [or 'infinite speaking'] of mere mortality and uselessness." Keying on the phrase "speaking endlessly," he makes an enigmatic marginal note that is both grammatically and semantically unconventional. It reads: "Why not say 'finite'? From that which remains [endures]?" (Warum nicht "endlich" sagen? Aus des Bleibenden?). The second phrase, a genitive singular form typical of Heidegger and derived from the substantive for "that which remains" or "endures" (das Bleibende), is semantically puzzling. Is he contradicting Celan by suggesting that the poem's temporality derives from something permanent, as opposed to Celan's "mortality and uselessness"? And what is it that is to be extracted from "that which remains"? His query about why Celan does not say "finite" instead of what he takes to be "infinite speaking" suggests that he wants him to come out more clearly for the temporality of the poem that, according to Pöggeler, Heidegger himself advocates.

This response could be based either on a misreading or an attempt to clarify ambivalence. Celan's noun "speaking endlessly" (Unendlichsprechung) is a neologism formed from two legitimate words. If it clearly meant "infinite speaking," in conventional German it would read "Unendlichkeitssprechung." But in Celan's new form that drops the "keit" suffix, it acquires a double meaning. Taken one way, it can mean "endless speaking," that is, speaking that endures, is eternal, is endless. This is the reading Heidegger apparently wanted to impose on it. But drawing on daily usage, where "unendlich sprechen" can refer to someone who never stops talking, "Unendlichsprechung" would then mean "speaking without cessation," which would confirm its temporality. If, as Pöggeler suggests, Heidegger took it to have the first meaning, or at least recognized the ambiguity in the formulation, it is understandable why he objected to Celan's assertion and wanted him to correct or disambiguate it by using the term *finite*. As the poet stated in his Bremen speech, Celan does not view poems as being "timeless" (zeitlos), but he leaves open the paradoxical possibility that despite their temporality they can in fact "reach through time" (durch die Zeit hindurchgreifen, *GW* 3:186). Thus it seems that he and Heidegger held generally similar views about the temporality of the poem but that Celan left open a possibility for a poem to extend beyond its own time.

Ambiguous Markings: "The Region" and "Paths"

Other passages also leave open questions about what Heidegger meant by his responses. In a discussion about art on page 20 of his text he engaged one paragraph that reads, "Art, thus also the Medusa's head, the mechanism, the robots, the uncanny strangeness so hard to tell apart, in the end perhaps really only *one* strangeness—art lives on" (*SPP* 411) (Die Kunst, also auch das Medusenhaupt, der Mechanismus, die Automaten, das unheimliche und so schwer zu unterscheidende, letzten Endes vielleicht doch nur *eine* Fremde—die Kunst lebt fort, *GW* 3:200). Heidegger underlined the phrase "in the end," put quotation marks around it, and then, in an uncharacteristic move for him, entered "Schade!" (too bad!) in the margin next to it. One can only speculate on what he intended. Was he disappointed that a poet of Celan's ability had used a hackneyed phrase like this when he was capable of better? And why did he set the phrase "in the end" in quotation marks? Was he disturbed by, or did he reject, the claim that in the end art lives on as the *only* strangeness? These and other unanswered questions occur here and at various other points.

In other passages it is also difficult to know if Heidegger disagreed or simply wished that Celan had used formulations that would make it easier for him to establish a connection to his own thought. One passage reads, "But in just this way doesn't the poem stand, right here, in an encounter—*in the mystery of an encounter?*" (*SPP* 409) (Aber steht das Gedicht nicht gerade dadurch, also schon hier, in der Begegnung—*im Geheimnis der Begegnung? GW* 3:198). In the margin next to this sentence Heidegger wrote, "In what region?" (In welcher Gegend?).

Here Heidegger indulges in an etymological wordplay by connecting the root of the term *region* (Gegend) with its identical root in the word *encounter* (Begegnung). He might be responding to Celan's recurrent use in *Meridian* of the term *site* (Ort), the indeterminate metaphysical or metaphorical locus where an encounter of any sort—between two people, between the poet and unspoken language, between a thinker and the principle of reason, and so forth—takes place. Perhaps he enters his own term *region* in response to Celan's use of *encounter* as a means of inquiring where—in what region (Gegend)—according to Celan, an encounter takes place. In Heidegger's own writings the term *Gegend* recurs throughout, but he seldom treats the concept of an "encounter." Again it appears as though he might be trying to bring Celan into closer proximity with his own thinking.

Such a proximity is suggested by a passage in *Being and Time,* where Heideg-

ger first used the word *region* extensively. There it refers to a place of familiarity, of that which comes or belongs together: "The readiness-to-hand which belongs to any such region beforehand has the *character of inconspicuous familiarity* . . . Often the region of a place becomes accessible explicitly as a region only when one fails to find something in *its* place"[7] (Die vorgängige Zuhandenheit der jeweiligen Gegend hat . . . den *Charakter der unauffälligen Vertrautheit* . . . Im Nichtantreffen von etwas an *seinem* Platz wird die Gegend des Platzes oft zum erstenmal ausdrücklich als solche zugänglich, *G* 2:139).

In his book *On the Way to Language,* published more than three decades later, Heidegger claims that he is seeking the "neighborhood" (Nachbarschaft) in which the language of poetry and thinking resides (*G* 12:174) and of finding a way or path to this "region," which in Celan's terminology might be the path on which the encounter takes place:

> For reflective thinking on the contrary, the path belongs here in what we call the region. Speaking allusively, the region as that which counters is the revealed clearing, in which all that is cleared, along with all that is self-concealing, comes into the open . . . but decisive for the reflective use of language . . . cannot be the usage of common meaning, but rather what the hidden riches of language hold in store in order to summon up for us the saying of language. The region as region only offers paths. It creates paths . . . in the sense of initially producing and establishing paths . . . [of] opening a path.
>
> [Für das sinnende Denken dagegen gehört der Weg in das, was wir die Gegend nennen. Andeutend gesagt, ist die Gegend als das Gegnende die freigegebene Lichtung, in der das Gelichtete zugleich mit dem Sichverbergenden in das Freie gelangt . . . Aber maßgebend für den besinnlichen Sprachgebrauch . . . [ist das], was der verborgene Reichtum der Sprache bereithält, um uns daraus zu be-langen für das Sagen der Sprache. Die Gegend ergibt als Gegend erst Wege . . . im Sinne von: Wege allererst ergeben und stiften . . . einen Weg bahnen.] (*G* 12:186)

These statements reveal a similarity to Celan's words in the "Meridian" speech when he speaks of "paths" where encounters with language occur:

> Then does one, in thinking of poems, does one walk such paths with poems? Are these paths only by-paths, bypaths [*sic*] from thou to thou? Yet at the same time, among how many other paths, they're also paths on which language gets a voice, they are encounters, paths of a voice to a perceiving Thou. (*SPP* 412)
>
> [Geht man also, wenn man an Gedichte denkt, geht man mit Gedichten solche Wege? Sind diese Wege nur Um-Wege, Umwege von dir zu dir? Aber es sind ja zu-

> gleich auch, unter wie vielen anderen Wegen, Wege, auf denen die Sprache stimmhaft wird, es sind Begegnungen, Wege einer Stimme zu einem wahrnehmenden Du.] (*GW* 3:201)

Within the word nexus of "region," "encounters," and "paths" shared by the two, it seems that Heidegger's question in the margin about the "region" in which Celan claims encounters take place was not an objection but an attempt to look at him through his own prism and see him as a poet whose vision was largely concordant with his own. Heidegger appeared to confirm this desire to seize on apparent affinities when, toward the end of *Meridian,* he underlined Celan's word *region* and made two marginal slashes next to the sentence that reads "I am seeking the region that Reinhold Lenz and Karl Emil Franzos come from, whom I encountered on my path here and via Georg Büchner" (*SPP* 413) (Ich suche die Gegend, aus der Reinhold Lenz und Karl Emil Franzos, die mir auf dem Weg hierher und bei Georg Büchner Begegneten, kommen, *GW* 3:202). Then he entered a marginal notation that reads "*On the Way to Language,* 1959." Whatever their differing views on some aspects of language, it is probably not too much to assume that this reference was intended as an affirmation. It implies that in his book, Heidegger thinks a reader can find something similar to what Celan is saying at this point in his "Meridian" speech.

Celan's *Breathturn*

Judging by the number of underlines, marginal notations, and cross-references he entered in the text, Heidegger also felt a strong attraction to Celan's concept of "breath" (Atem) and "breathturn" (Atemwende). His handwritten entry at one point, which notes that in 1967 Celan published poems under the title *Breathturn,* confirms that the term itself continued to fascinate him for several years after he first read it in the *Meridian* pamphlet. One might speculate that he sensed an affinity with the image of "breath" because of an imaginative usage that paralleled his own. At two points Celan mentions Lucille, a character in Büchner's drama *Danton's Death,* who does not listen carefully but who "sees" someone speaking in the sense of "seeing language." It is possible that this synesthetic usage appealed to him as another convergence of thought and of language usage, for in *Being and Time* (and in a passage that Celan had marked while reading that work) he had pointed out that in Greek the term *discoursing* (das Reden) means "letting something be seen" (Sehenlassen, *GW* 2:44), a statement that Celan illustrates with radical literalness in his characterization of Lucille.

The poet's use of *breath* and *breathturn* also might have appealed to Heidegger's own propensity for imaginative imagery that located traces of authentic language in unexplored gaps or interstices, which is what the word *breathturn* does. Though not attested in any lexicon, it can be understood as referring to the undetermined point in breathing where inhalation becomes exhalation. Like Heidegger's recurrent images of light such as the forest clearing (Lichtung) that use physical phenomena for abstractions, this one employs a physiological image for a concept that is simultaneously an abstraction and a concrete event in time and space, even though it did not exist until Celan coined the term—a neologism as original as anything Heidegger ever created, and more poetic. It exists in the same realm of the unspeakable, the silenced, and the concealed on which so much of Heidegger's thinking about language is focused.

In his memoirs Baumann reports that Heidegger recognized a strong affinity between Celan and the poet Lenz in Büchner's literary portrayal of that figure.[8] Pöggeler claims that it was a passage about Lenz in Celan's "Meridian" speech that served as the starting point for his discussion of that speech with Heidegger.[9] Citing Büchner's portrayal, Celan says, "Only sometimes it troubled him that he could not walk on his head (*SPP* 407) (Nur war es ihm manchmal unangenehm, dass er nicht auf dem Kopf gehn konnte, *GW* 3:195). This passage elicited a marginal note that connected this concept of walking on one's head with the four-line poem from "Voices" Celan had sent him the previous year. Heidegger's notation reads: "to come on your hands" (auf den Handen kommen), followed by a cross-reference to the page of the speech where Celan himself cites the full quatrain. There Heidegger entered an asterisk that he explains at the bottom: "cf. P. Celans handwritten dedication in 'Speech-Grille' 1959" (vgl. Celans eigenhändige Widmung in "Sprachgitter" 1959). Clearly he was referring to this same quatrain that Celan had included in his dedication to the edition of *Speech-Grille* he had sent a few months earlier.

One can only speculate on what drew Heidegger to the two passages in which walking on one's head or one's hands turns heaven into an abyss. Was it his own fascination with and repeated use in his own works of the terms *Abgrund* (abyss), *Grund* (ground, principle), and *Ungrund* (nonground, nonreason) that could be said to have found literary expression in Büchner and Celan? Had Pöggeler told Heidegger about Celan's mental condition, which prompted a discussion of the similarities between the demented Lenz and the onset of mental illness in Celan, of which Pöggeler was well informed? Whatever the answer, this and other entries suggest that regardless of their differences, Heidegger was still well disposed toward the poet, despite the ambivalence he may have felt about some of

his ideas. It appears that he wanted to find convergences rather than differences of thought and that he apparently chose to ignore obvious divergences in order to keep alive a dialogue with his vis-à-vis.

Celan probably did not know of Heidegger's reading of his "Meridian" speech. In his deteriorating mental state, it seems unlikely that he could have given a balanced response (his condition became so severe that he was finally committed to a mental hospital in December 1962). Against this backdrop it is understandable that when Pöggeler approached him sometime in 1962 and asked permission to dedicate *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers,* Pöggeler's forthcoming Heidegger book, to him, Celan declined.[10] According to Pöggeler, the poet did not want his name openly connected with Heidegger's before being able to ask him to account for his past. Despite the rejection, Celan's answer was unusual for another reason. Almost without exception during this period he broke off and refused further contact with anyone tainted in any way by a Nazi past. The fact that he did not close the door to a future meeting with Heidegger suggests that an encounter with the thinker was still on his mind and that the same attraction-repulsion that had characterized their relationship for some time still had a hold on him.

Heidegger's admiration of Celan was also ambivalent, though in a different way. Although he admired and felt drawn to Celan's poetry, some of it he did not understand or find accessible, which is why he enlisted Pöggeler, with his direct access to Celan, as "translator" and interpreter. Not surprisingly, Pöggeler also reports that Heidegger read the poetry selectively, often imposing his own perspective, which was not necessarily Celan's.[11] Presumably he would have had better access to the "Meridian" speech than to some of the poetry, since it was conceived as a phenomenological treatise. This might explain why he engaged the text so intensively and left a record of his responses to it. But one episode illustrates how, in spite of his admiration for Celan's language, he did not have easy access to the poet's world.

Sometime in 1961 Pöggeler and Heidegger also sat down and worked through some of Celan's Mandelstam translations. Pöggeler was surprised at how Heidegger concentrated on one poem ("Sleeplessness: Homer") and brusquely dismissed others that were existentially important to Celan, especially the Jerusalem poem "The Priests." Though he admired Celan greatly, his narrow prism closed off some of the poetry and part of Celan's spiritual and intellectual world to Heidegger. Yet Celan continued to exercise a pull on him that can only be explained in terms of a half-understood attraction to his remarkable poetry.

Contact between 1961 and 1967

Based on what is known today, Celan and Heidegger had little direct contact between 1961 and their meeting in 1967, though indirectly they kept in touch by reading each other's works. A copy of Heidegger's 1954 book *Plato's Teaching on Truth, with a Letter on "Humanism"* found in Celan's posthumous library might have reached him during this period. Undated, it contained the handwritten dedication, "With friendly greetings. Martin Heidegger" (Mit freundlichem Gruss. Martin Heidegger). If it was sent between 1962 and 1967, Celan's failure to reply might have contributed to the hiatus in their dialogue, though his ill health (he was in and out of mental institutions during this period) probably was the decisive factor in their lack of contact. In the summer of 1964 Celan reread Heidegger's Nietzsche essay in *Lectures and Essays* (he had first read it in August 1959) and entered a reading date of August 6, 1964. In the same period he recorded the dates when he purchased two more works by Heidegger—*The Question Concerning Technology (Die Technik und die Kehre)* on February 6, 1963, and *Discourse on Thinking (Gelassenheit)* on October 29, 1964. There is no record of what prompted him to buy them, but markings suggest that he read the latter work but probably not the former. Yet despite the braking effect of his illness on the imagined dialogue, it is clear that it had not terminated it.

Pöggeler claims that by 1964 Heidegger confessed that he found Celan's poems in the volume entitled *The No One's Rose,* which appeared in 1963, unsympathetic, not easily accessible, and too "allegorical."[12] Therefore he turned his attention to other younger poets and recommended that Pöggeler read a recent volume of poems by Peter Huchel.[13] Though he interpreted this as a turning away from Celan, Pöggeler claims Heidegger encouraged him to continue publishing about Celan's poetry.[14]

Clearly, then, neither completely forgot the other. While visiting Würzburg, Germany, in January 1965, Celan attended the inaugural lecture of a newly appointed professor, Beda Allemann, a Swiss scholar, former colleague, and friend who had arranged for him to receive a teaching position at the École Normale Supérieure in 1959, and who displayed great sensitivity toward his poetry. Ironically, Allemann's writings drew heavily on Heideggerian thought, though apparently this did not matter to Celan. In a postcard to his wife, the poet noted that after the lecture he, Allemann, and a few friends met around a table in a hall called "the home of Being." Though writing to his wife in French, Celan at this point inserts the German word *Seinsheim,* which he then translates as "Foyer de

l'Etre." Furthermore, he marks this obvious allusion to Heidegger with an asterisk, which he deciphers in an ironic footnote that reads, "but yes, that was a bishop . . ." (c'était, mai oui, un évêque). Clearly he was connecting the thinker's Catholic upbringing, his Jesuit education, and his early plans to become a cleric with the Heideggerian-sounding name of the hall.[15]

As a further sign that he still held Celan's work in high esteem, in 1965 Heidegger sent a copy of his translation of Valéry's *La jeune Parque* to Eugen Fink for the publisher's sixty-fifth birthday. Furthermore, Pöggeler states, the thinker did, in fact, return to Celan's poems.[16] This is obvious from a letter Heidegger wrote to a colleague in 1967, when Celan finally agreed to a visit that would allow them to meet in person. It confirms that during this period the thinker's interest in and knowledge of the poet's works and personal life apparently never lagged, for it speaks of his estimation of the poet, of his knowledge of Celan's poetry, of the poet's severe illness, and of his desire to help in the healing process.[17] Their dialogue had almost ceased for a time, but Heidegger's ongoing awareness of and interest in Celan's work, and his solicitude for his person, were about to renew it. This time the dialogue would be in the form of a face-to-face meeting, and the results would be as ambiguous, contradictory, and inconclusive as almost everything else about their relationship to that point had been.

"An Epoch-Making Encounter"

Freiburg and Todtnauberg, 1967

Two bits of circumstantial evidence suggest that soon after Pöggeler entered the scene as an intermediary in 1957, Celan began to entertain the idea of visiting Heidegger. On September 3, 1958, the German writer Paul Schallück sent him copies of two articles that had appeared in the journal *Les temps modernes* (1946).[1] The first, "A Conversation with Martin Heidegger," gives an account by Maurice de Gandillac, a representative of the French occupational government in postwar Germany, of a 1945 visit to Freiburg and a conversation with the thinker. This brief report openly addresses Heidegger's Nazi past. The second, entitled "A Visit with Martin Heidegger," was written by Alfred de Towarnicki, also a representative of French occupational authorities in 1945. Its report on a visit gives a somewhat longer account of Heidegger's activities during the Third Reich. Neither author was ill-disposed toward the thinker, yet neither made an attempt to exculpate him. But their reports also included nothing that could be construed as an apology or admission of guilt on his part. Since each touched on the issue that had troubled Celan since he first read Heidegger, they might have given him hope that he, too, could engage Heidegger in a conversation about his Nazi past.

The second bit of evidence was a biography of Edith Stein that Celan bought and read in 1959. Stein, a remarkable Jewish woman, had begun a promising career as a philosopher after writing a doctoral dissertation with Edmund Husserl in the 1920s and working as his teaching and research assistant for a year. Soon afterward she converted to Catholicism, became a Carmelite nun, and in 1942 was deported by the Nazis and gassed in Auschwitz. Inside the back cover of her biography Celan entered the notation: "Visit to Heidegger, p. 78."[2] That page describes a visit she made in January 1931 to solicit Heidegger's support in being accepted for candidacy to write the "Habilitation" treatise, a prerequisite for her

entry into the academic profession. Although she realized that Heidegger, a lapsed Catholic, would not want to direct her work on Catholic philosophy and theology, she was surprised at his extraordinary interest in and support of her career. He treated her with great kindness and even offered to arrange a scholarship for her, which he assured her would be approved, even though she would be studying Catholic theology and not working with him. These accounts of cordial receptions—the notation in the biography of Stein was one of only three entries he made in the text—suggest that Heidegger was very much on Celan's mind at the time. They easily could have raised the very realistic hope that he too would be received warmly by the thinker. But the turmoil created by the Goll affair that preoccupied him during the next few years, and the onset of mental illness, disrupted his life and personal relationships so severely that he was no longer able to pursue his wish. A meeting with Heidegger came about only because other parties arranged it for him. When they did, Celan was not in the best frame of mind to meet the philosopher.

Meeting Heidegger: Celan's Mental State

In numerous treatments of what some consider an epoch-making encounter, almost no one has observed that when Celan visited Heidegger in Freiburg on July 24–25, 1967, he was on a leave of absence from confinement in a psychiatric clinic to which he returned after the visit (he was not formally released until October of that year). This was only one of several confinements, some of them forced. The first occurred on December 31, 1962; another in 1965 after he attempted to kill his wife; another in 1966; and a final one toward the end of 1968. An unexpected encounter with Claire Goll at the Goethe Institute in Paris on January 25, 1967, had so unhinged him that he attempted suicide five days later and was forcibly confined to the clinic on February 13, 1967, where he remained until the visit to Freiburg. A few weeks before he met Heidegger his physicians had granted him ambulatory status that allowed him to teach during the day at the École Normale Supérieure and return to the clinic in the evening.

Clearly his condition was improving, or he would not have received permission to travel to Freiburg. Thus, when he visited Heidegger, he was able to function fairly well on his own and was no longer considered a threat to himself or to others. But he was far from well, and he knew it. In an unpublished letter of June 30 to his friend Professor Beda Allemann in Würzburg, he asked if Allemann could come to Frankfurt to meet him after his visit to Freiburg. In what appears to be allusion to his precarious condition, he admits, "I'll tell you can-

didly that I find myself in a situation where a conversation with you is very important to me" (Ich sage es unumwunden: ich befinde mich in einer Situation, in der mir ein Gespräch mit Ihnen wichtig ist).[3]

His medical records have remained closed, so it is impossible to determine an exact diagnosis of his condition. Gerhart Baumann, a professor of German at the University of Freiburg who became acquainted with him after the onset of his mental illness and who wrote an insightful, detailed account of their friendship, describes his everyday behavior when he was not hospitalized as characteristic of someone living on the edge of an emotional abyss.[4] Absent from his account are references to the unusually engaging person Celan was earlier, one who could be playful and witty, even charming, one who loved puns and wordplay, one who enjoyed visiting circuses with his son, and one who cared deeply for his friends. Baumann's description abounds in examples of Celan's hypersensitivity to the slightest irritation; his constant suspicion, which easily turned into full-blown paranoia; his irritability; his distrust of almost everyone he did not know, especially Germans; his sometimes petulant behavior; his ill-humor; his occasionally impulsive statements, though he was normally reserved, proper, and discreet; his overall air of depression or sadness; his criticism of former friends; and his almost inconsolable sense of loneliness. Beda Allemann's widow, Doris, who also remembers Celan as an extremely difficult person in this period, illustrates his tendency to take umbrage at the smallest incident. She recalls his becoming upset at a single word—harmless to others, but offensive to him—spoken in a group of friends, which caused him to walk out of the room.[5]

The visit to Heidegger in July 1967 was preceded by another traumatic event that further destabilized him. During his confinement in April that year, and after lengthy discussions, he reluctantly acceded to his wife's demands that they live separately in the future because his sometimes unpredictable lapses into violent behavior had become a serious threat to her and their son's safety. Though he had hoped to work one or two days a week in their apartment in order to have access to his large library, her fear of having him physically present forced him in May to begin moving his books and belongings to his office in the École Normale Supérieure, where he would live for some time after his release from the clinic until he found his own apartment. Stripped of his closest personal support system (he relied heavily on his wife and son), and in a psychic state that intensified his paranoia about anything associated with Nazism past or present, it is amazing that his meeting with Heidegger took place at all, for the profound ambivalence that marked his entire relationship to the thinker was still present, exacerbated now by his fragile mental health and the deterioration of his marriage.

Through Baumann he received an invitation to read his poetry at the University of Freiburg in the summer of 1967. Since Celan had told him of his desire to meet Heidegger, Baumann tried to arrange a date when the philosopher could be present. In a letter to his wife written from the clinic and dated June 20, 1967, Celan appeared more than willing to schedule the reading in order to accommodate Heidegger's schedule: "The reading in Freiburg will take place on the 21st or the 24th. That depends on when Heidegger can be present" (La lecture à Fribourg aura lieu le 21 ou le 24, cela depend de la presence de Heidegger).[6] This suggests that despite his ambivalence, his wish to meet the thinker still remained strong. But as the date approached, misgivings arose. When Franz Wurm heard he was going to Freiburg, he requested in a letter that when Celan met Heidegger, he should deliver Wurm's cordial greetings.[7] This prompted Celan, who was still hospitalized, to write his wife on July 17 that Wurm's request "hardly overwhelms me with happiness" (ce qui ne me comble guère de bonheur).[8] Clearly he was not in a cordial or conciliatory mood in the days preceding their meeting. His wife, to whom he had expressed his misgivings about Heidegger earlier, replied the next day: "I understand that the reading in Freiburg with Heidegger present will cause you some difficulties. Nevertheless I hope it will come off all right."[9]

Heidegger shared none of these tormenting doubts about their meeting. While Baumann was trying to fix a date for the reading, the thinker responded to his colleague's inquiry:

> I've wanted to become acquainted with Paul Celan for a long time. He stands farthest in the forefront and holds himself back the most. I know all of his works, also of the serious crisis from which he managed to extricate himself as much as a person is able. You are correct in interpreting how helpful a reading here would be. July 24 would be the best date for me . . . It would also be healing to show P.C. the Black Forest. Recently I found a new volume of his poems advertised: *Breathturn*.
>
> [Schon lange wünsche ich, Paul Celan kennen zu lernen. Er steht am weitesten vorne und hält sich am meisten zurück. Ich kenne alles von ihm, weiß auch von der schweren Krise, aus der er sich selbst herausgeholt hat, soweit dies ein Mensch vermag. Sie deuten in dieser Hinsicht das Hilfreiche einer hiesigen Lesung richtig. Der 24. Juli wäre für mich der beste Termin . . . Es wäre heilsam, P.C. auch den Schwarzwald zu zeigen. Kürzlich fand ich einen neuen Gedichtband von ihm angezeigt: *Atemwende*.][10]

This awareness of Celan's delicate mental state served Heidegger well almost from the moment he first met him, and it probably averted what could have been

a disaster. Baumann, the only participant to have published a firsthand account of the time the two men spent together in Freiburg, describes their initial encounter in a hotel lobby one hour before Celan was to read his poetry.[11] Someone in the small group suggested that a photo of the two men should be taken. The normally decorous Celan shocked everyone by standing up and declaring abruptly that he did not wish to be photographed with Heidegger. The philosopher himself diplomatically intervened by announcing that if the poet did not want to, they should drop the matter. Celan then left for a few minutes and, after returning, let it be known that he no longer had any objections to being photographed with Heidegger. But the tone had been set, and no one now dared to photograph them together.

Nor was this kind of ambivalent behavior limited to one incident. Late in the evening Celan was still in high spirits over the reception of his poetry reading by more than one thousand attentive and appreciative listeners (Heidegger sat in the front row) in the same auditorium where thirty-four years earlier Heidegger had delivered his famous speech ("The Self-Assertion of the German University") when he became rector of the university in 1933. This time the two men carried on what must have been a cordial conversation. According to one of those present, Heidegger claimed that his thinking to that point was only preparatory and that some future thinker would need to expand and extend what he had begun.[12] Before leaving, he invited Celan for the next morning to visit his famous "hut," or "Berghütte," the local term for a cabin (his had several small rooms) in the mountains of the Black Forest near the village of Todtnauberg. Given that Celan had already expressed a wish to see one of the mountain moors in the vicinity, this seemed an ideal opportunity. Celan accepted, after which Heidegger thanked him again for his reading and departed. No sooner was he gone, however, than Celan began to raise objections with Baumann. He found it difficult, he stated, to meet a man whose past he could not forget. Thereupon he declared he would not go. Baumann pointed out that Heidegger was only trying to respond to a favor that Celan had requested and that before coming he himself had expressed a wish to get acquainted with the thinker in Freiburg. But of course he would respect his choice. He left Celan's hotel not knowing if the poet would keep his appointment.[13]

Apparently with no word about his misgivings, Celan appeared early the next morning (July 25) when Baumann's assistant, the young scholar Gerhard Neumann, picked him up and drove to the mountain village of Todtnauberg and Heidegger's nearby cabin.[14] Baumann, who had to conduct examinations at the university that morning, was to meet them later. Since he was absent, he could not report on the conversation that took place en route to Heidegger's cabin, what

was said in the cabin, or what the men discussed again in the car while driving to the town of Sankt Blasien, where Baumann joined them later in the morning. That absence touched off endless speculation over the next three decades on what was said or left unsaid during this critical period that lasted from three to three and one-half hours, the only time they were alone together except for their driver, Neumann, who failed to record any of their conversation and apparently did not talk about it until years later. Only in the 1990s did bits of information begin to emerge that present a somewhat fuller picture of what happened. Yet besides being fragmentary and ambivalent, a quality they share with many of Celan's poems, these fragments produce a picture that, like the dialogue between Celan and Heidegger that preceded it, is filled with contradictions.

Conversing in Silence? The Big Topic of Conversation

In August 1997 Stephan Krass published a description of this meeting. It included a brief account of an interview he had with Neumann about what Celan and Heidegger discussed while he was driving them thirty years earlier.[15] Neumann, he claims, was hesitant in remembering details, but two impressions remained. First, he recalled clearly the "painful silence" that dominated much of the conversation. Second, and perhaps more important, Neumann claims that they did in fact speak with each other between these depressing silences, and the topic—clearly triggered by Celan's questions—was about Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism. Other than these general statements, Neumann gave no further details.

In January 1998 Krass also published the only letter from Heidegger to Celan known to have survived from their correspondence. Dated January 30, 1968, Heidegger was reacting to a copy of an expensive limited edition of a poem entitled "Todtnauberg" that Celan had sent him recently. In it he reflects briefly on their visit six months earlier and thanks him for the poem, which he describes as "the word of the poet . . . that preserves the memory of a day of various moods in the Black Forest" (das Wort des Dichters, das . . . das Andenken an einen vielfältig gestimmten Tag im Schwarzwald aufbewahrt).[16] Heidegger then made an unusual observation that seems consistent with what Neumann reported about their conversation in the car: "Since then [our meeting] we have exchanged a good deal of mutual silence. I think that someday some of it will be redeemed from unspokenness through conversation" (Seitdem haben wir Vieles einander zugeschwiegen. Ich denke, dass einiges noch eines Tages im Gespräch aus dem Ungesprochenen gelöst wird).

Heidegger's statements about exchanging mutual silence and his desire to redeem some of it from unspokenness echoes at least in part Neumann's version of what happened during their travel to his cabin and the subsequent trip to Sankt Blasien. The entry Celan made in the guest book at Heidegger's cabin, which might have been written in response to this conversation, also provides a possible clue about what was said. It reads, "In the cabin book, with a view of the star on the well, in the hope of a coming word in the heart. July 25, 1967 / Paul Celan" (Ins Hüttenbuch, mit dem Blick auf den Brunnenstern, mit einer Hoffnung auf ein kommendes Wort im Herzen. Am 25. Juli 1967 / Paul Celan).[17] Celan's hope for a response from Heidegger at some future time might be read as frustration at the silence that marked much of their conversation. But it also might refer to something specific Heidegger had said that began a conversation from which Celan drew the hope that more complete answers from Heidegger would be forthcoming. When or how that specific "something" was said is difficult to determine. It is possible, for example, that it was spoken in Heidegger's cabin and that Neumann was not present to hear it. But sometime during their few hours together that morning Celan must have had what he saw as a fairly substantial conversation with Heidegger about his Nazi past that prompted a remarkable change in his attitude.

According to letters that appeared for the first time in 2001, on August 2, seven days after their meeting, Celan, who was now back in the psychiatric clinic in Paris, wrote his wife with a brief description of this time alone with Heidegger and Neumann. After mentioning that Heidegger approached him following his poetry reading the night before, he reported to her:

> On the day after my reading I was in Heidegger's cabin in the Black Forest with Herr Neumann . . . Then in the car we had a very serious conversation in words that were unmistakable on my part. Afterward Herr Neumann, who was a witness, told me that for him this conversation had an epoch-making aspect to it.
>
> [Le lendemain de ma lecture j'ai été avec M. Neumann . . . dans le cabanon (Hütte) de Heidegger dans la Forét-Noire. Puis ce fut, dans la voiture, un dialogue grave, avec des paroles claires de ma part. M. Neumann, qui en fut le témoin, m'a dit ensuite que pour lui cette conversation avait eu un aspect epochal.][18]

Five days later, on August 7, he elaborated to his friend Franz Wurm on the meeting with Heidegger. Like the letter to his wife, this one, which was not published until decades after they met (1995), contradicted a long-held view that the encounter with Heidegger had been a disastrous failure of communication. In fact, Celan states that it went well: "I've been back from Germany a few days, where

everything went well, including the meeting with Heidegger, with whom I carried on a long and very explicit conversation, and to whom I transmitted your greetings" (Ich bin seit seit wenigen Tagen aus Deutschland zurück, wo alles gut ging, auch das Zusammentreffen mit Heidegger, mit dem ich ein langes und recht deutliches Gespräch geführt und dem ich auch Ihre Grüße übermittelt habe).[19] Several points stand out in these statements. First, Celan claims he accomplished his task to his own satisfaction, which means he must have asked Heidegger clearly and unequivocally about his Nazi past. Furthermore, he notes that they engaged in a "long and very explicit conversation." There is no sign that he felt constrained by insufficient time or lack of opportunity. From his vantage point he believed his questions had been understood and had reached their mark. His remarks also allow the conclusion that Heidegger's responses to the questions must have been more than perfunctory, or Celan would have rejected them.

More than a year before their encounter, Heidegger for the first time publicly had broken his notorious silence about his activities during the Third Reich. Since the end of World War II he had been subject to ongoing accusations and attacks for his thought and behavior during those years and for his refusal to speak about them after the war. That began to change when a book about his political philosophy was reviewed in the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* on February 9, 1966. The review claimed that Heidegger's entire philosophical thinking was fundamentally fascist in its core, and it charged him with specific acts of anti-Semitism against Jewish faculty members at the university of Freiburg.[20] Apparently this was more than he could take. On March 7, 1966, Heidegger responded with a letter to the editor of *Der Spiegel* in which, among other things, he pointed to errors in the book review about his alleged actions under the Nazis vis-à-vis his former teacher Edmund Husserl and his colleague Gerhard Ritter.[21] Though avoiding larger questions, he had publicly opened the door slightly on his past. It is not known if Celan had read it before he came, but the letter was symptomatic of Heidegger's willingness on a limited scale finally to address questions about the Nazi years.

A few months later on September 23, 1966, the thinker granted an interview to Rudolf Augstein, the tough-minded editor of *Der Spiegel*, on the condition that it not be published until after his death. Even though the interview was first published soon after he died in May 1976[22] his speaking openly about these events with Augstein in 1966 might have made it easier for him to respond to Celan's interrogations with fewer reservations eleven months later. It seems probable that Heidegger repeated to Celan at least some elements of that unpublished interview and his letter in which he gave specific answers to certain

questions about his role in the Third Reich. It is also possible that this interview, which he surely mentioned to Celan, gave the poet the concrete hope for a "coming word in the heart"—a fuller account of his activities in the Nazi period that Heidegger claimed it contained. Whatever he said, he clearly did not try to deflect or avoid Celan's questions as he did with inquiries from most other persons after World War II. Though further details of the conversation remain unknown, the letters cited above make it clear that Heidegger's answers seem to have satisfied Celan, which is remarkable considering the poet's strong misgivings about the meeting generally and this outing specifically. Though he later changed his version of how he viewed their meeting, these statements immediately after the fact that things went well in his meeting and conversation with Heidegger must be taken at face value as his legitimate initial reaction.

A further hint of what they discussed and why it satisfied Celan's desire for an accounting appears in the letter to his wife of August 2. Following his citation of Neumann that this conversation with Heidegger had an "epoch-making aspect" to it, he added, "I hope that Heidegger will take his pen and write a few pages echoing [the conversation] that will be a warning in view of resurgent Nazism" (J'espère que Heidegger prendra sa plume et qu'il écrira q[uel]q[ues] pages faisant echo, avertissant aussi, alors que le nazisme remonte).[23] Judging by this statement it seems that Celan must have heard something from Heidegger about his activities during the Hitler era that he interpreted either as a statement of guilt or complicity or at least as the admission of a serious error he made in aligning himself with the Nazis. Otherwise, how could Celan hope that, in light of recrudescent neo-Nazism, any words Heidegger wrote about this encounter could be used to warn contemporary Germans against repeating his error? In private Heidegger had confessed to Pöggeler that he had made an inexcusable error in what he did after 1933.[24] If he had admitted this to Pöggeler, who had transmitted so much information to him about Celan and the poet's anguish over being a Holocaust survivor, it does not stretch the imagination to think that he might have admitted at least this much to Celan.

Effects of the Meeting on Celan and Heidegger

Regardless of what was said in this unrecorded conversation, one consequence of it was undisputable—its startling therapeutic effect on Celan. Baumann, who joined the group at 11 a.m. and went with them to visit a moor (they were rained out and had to turn back), was surprised to discover both conversation partners in high spirits. Gone was the gloomy mood that had surrounded Celan the pre-

vious evening, and he was no longer guarded in his comments. The atmosphere at a noon meal in a restaurant where they ate was also comfortable and expansive, and according to Baumann, conversation among the three of them flowed freely.[25]

Other evidence from their conversations in the car and at Heidegger's cabin makes it clear that despite long silences at the beginning, they must have warmed to each other gradually, though Heidegger was clearly more receptive of Celan at the outset than the poet was of him. They discussed writers and translations of literature, among them Emily Dickinson's poetry, which Celan had translated, and Adalbert Stifter's prose.[26] In a letter to his wife of September 29, 1967, he asked her to leave his personal copy of a French translation of short stories by Adalbert Stifter with the concierge at the École Normale Supérieure so he could pick it up. He says he had promised to send Heidegger a copy, but his book dealer could not find it.[27] His intention of sending his own copy to keep a promise made in Todtnauberg further suggests that his memory of the visit was by no means negative or condemnatory.

In contrast to Celan's distrustful approach to Heidegger, the thinker, who knew of the poet's precarious psychic state, had gone to some effort to prepare for his visit and to accept him warmly. Baumann reports how, in anticipation of the poetry reading, he had called a book-dealer friend in Freiburg and asked him to contact others and have them display Celan's works in their windows. Heidegger's reputation carried sufficient weight that when Baumann took Celan on a foot tour of the city, he was delighted to see his works on display in every major bookstore window. He had no idea, however, that Heidegger was responsible for these displays.[28]

Before Celan's arrival Heidegger also had inscribed a copy of his work *What Is Called Thinking:* "For Paul Celan, in gratitude for the reading on July 24, 1967" (Für Paul Celan, zum Dank für die Lesung am 24. Juli 1967). He gave him this copy on the evening after the poetry reading. The next day, while they were at Heidegger's cabin, he gave him—probably spontaneously—two more inscribed copies of his works. The dedication in one, *From the Experience of Thinking (Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens),* reads, "For Paul Celan in memory of the visit to the cabin on July 25, 1967" (Für Paul Celan zur Erinnerung an den Besuch auf der Hütte am 25. Juli 1967). The second, a collection of addresses delivered at a memorial service for his recently deceased friend Hans Jantzen that included a eulogy by Heidegger, had a similar dedication: "For Paul Celan in memory of being in the cabin on July 25, 1967" (Für Paul Celan zur Erinnerung auf der Hütte on July 25, 1967).[29]

There is no evidence that Celan brought copies of his own works as gifts for Heidegger, which, in view of his conflicted feelings and unstable condition, is understandable. But Heidegger's genuine solicitude and appreciation for the poet reflected in his gifts apparently carried over into the rest of their conversation and no doubt contributed to the transformation that Baumann recognized in Celan. Regardless of how Heidegger responded to questions about his past, the answers seem to have satisfied Celan for the moment or at least to have temporarily disarmed him. Furthermore, the thinker's personality, not to mention the cordiality and solicitude shown by the world-famous seventy-seven-year-old toward the forty-six-year-old Celan, also apparently helped thaw the younger man's distrust. This attention from a figure of Heidegger's stature also must have validated him as a poet. Baumann and Neumann further attest that the two men discovered strong mutual interests in naming and identifying mountain flowers and in local customs and lore.[30] According to Hans Georg Gadamer, Heidegger told him he learned from this visit that Celan knew more about plants and animals than he did.[31] Based on what he heard from Celan, Baumann also reports that during their visit Celan realized that he had other interests in common with Heidegger. Baumann claims, "In Todtnauberg Celan discovered the peasant farmer, the expert on nature, the mystic in Heidegger"[32]—traits that appealed to him strongly. Celan, according to Baumann, occasionally described himself in conversation as a "peasant farmer from the Bukowina,"[33] which is clearly a fiction but a stylization that underscored another affinity with an image that Heidegger himself cultivated at times in his dress and lifestyle.

There is not a shred of documented biographical evidence from their entire time together to suggest that Celan condemned Heidegger, felt hostility toward him, or was disappointed with him. In fact the opposite seems true. Later attempts to portray this as a failed encounter and an enormous disappointment for Celan are based on considerations that arose more than a week after the visit. These will be discussed in chapter 15.

In the afternoon following their luncheon in the Black Forest on July 25, Heidegger had to leave early to return to Freiburg. Celan drove back later with Baumann or Neumann. The following morning he left for Frankfurt by train. Though they had been together for only a few hours that morning and early afternoon, the meeting affected each man differently and in unexpected ways.

In his somber and depressed condition Celan had certainly not gone to Freiburg expecting temporary relief from his illness. Though the dramatic and salutary effects of the meeting with Heidegger would wear off, they lingered at least a few days, for when he reached Frankfurt on July 27, he was still in a pos-

itive, expansive state of mind. Gone for the moment were the despair, the irritability, and the deep-seated distrust of others that had become characteristic for him since the onset of his illness. Baumann records how Marie Luise Kaschnitz, a longtime friend of Celan's, called him from Frankfurt and asked what Baumann and others had done to the poet in Freiburg, for something had transformed him—he was almost unrecognizable, a "different Celan."[34] Kaschnitz, who had watched Celan's descent into mental illness and had been one of the recipients of his paranoid accusations when she tried to defend him against the charges of plagiarism, could hardly believe the difference. Temporarily, at least, the meeting with Heidegger had had an undeniable salutary effect on his mental state, which no one could have predicted and which most critics afterward have ignored.

For Heidegger, however, the outcome appears to have been less positive. Although his attitude toward Celan was, as Safranski describes it, "wooing, attentive, at times caring,"[35] it seems, ironically, that he was the one who was frustrated and disappointed. At present only two known documents register his reactions to his meeting with Celan, though more may exist. One is an unpublished letter of October 8, 1967, to Beda Allemann, whom he knew to be close to Celan. In it he reports that "Celan was very quiet here. But if I'd been completely alone with him, I would have ventured a conversation" (Celan war hier sehr still. Aber wenn ich mit ihm ganz allein gewesen wäre, hätte ich ein Gespräch gewagt).[36] Not a word about the "very explicit conversation" in which Celan, by his own account, asked directly about the thinker's Nazi past. Heidegger, it seems, had brought different expectations to their encounter, and contrary to Celan, he probably did not consider questions about his activities between 1933 and 1945 to be the kind of conversation that he had expected to have. His claim about Celan's being "very quiet" also suggests that initially, at least, the poet might have been reluctant to be drawn into a conversation on any other topic, since for him there was only one. Yet if Celan, in fact, asked the kinds of questions about Heidegger's past that he claims he did, he clearly was not completely quiet. Heidegger's frustration, it seems, was at being unable to initiate the kind of conversation he wanted, which doubtless would have been almost exclusively about poetry and which he might have attempted if they had been alone.

Hints of this frustration can also be heard in the only other known document in which Heidegger mentions their encounter—the letter he wrote to Celan on January 30, 1968, cited above. His reference to the "memory of various moods in the Black Forest" points to the activities they undertook during the roughly three hours they were together and another two or three after Baumann joined

them—the trip up winding Black Forest mountain roads to Todtnauberg; the time at the cabin together; their discussion of plant names around Heidegger's cabin; the drive through the mountains to three other destinations; Heidegger's description over lunch of the costumes and customs of the Black Forest residents; their conversation, in which Celan participated actively, about agricultural conditions, types of flora and fauna, and the dialect and folktales of the Alemannic region; and their rained-out attempt to walk to a mountain moor.[37] There seems, then, to have been a good deal of conversation during their time together but not the type Heidegger had hoped for. In writing of the "various moods" generated by these travels and activities, Heidegger's subtext is that because they undertook so much, there was little time for genuine, in-depth conversation. When his letter adds that "Since then we have exchanged a good deal of mutual silence," it could mean that from his perspective their initial conversation when they were in the car while traveling to Todtnauberg and at the cabin had not been easy (later it clearly was) but that he hoped to compensate for it in a future conversation that would redeem from "unspokenness" what for him remained unsaid at that time. Was this perhaps a reflection of his own frustration at what he thought were his own inadequate answers to Celan's questions? But this statement could also have a totally different meaning. Heidegger might have been contrasting the conversation that took place when they were together, which had become congenial, with the long silence that followed in the ensuing six months when neither corresponded with the other. Was he suggesting that each of them had been reflecting on the visit without having expanded on what was begun there and that each was also thinking of the conversation that remained unspoken?

For Heidegger a serious conversation on what he considered to be essential matters dealing with poetry and thinking had not taken place during their visit, though clearly there had been a good deal of talk about other things. Celan's questions about the thinker's Nazi past were probably not foremost in his mind, and although his answers clearly had a salutary effect on Celan, this was not the kind of conversation he had hoped to have with a poet he greatly admired. Probably in consequence of his mental illness, which slowly grew worse and led to increasing isolation, Celan later changed his version of this meeting and became more critical of Heidegger. This was typical of his behavior in the final years, for he had become equally critical when speaking of even his closest friends.[38] These later negative accounts have given rise to the almost overwhelming view that the visit to Todtnauberg was at best a disappointment to him and at worst an unmitigated disaster. This restrictive view has dominated all subsequent interpre-

tations of the poem "Todtnauberg" in which he recorded that visit. Lacking access to the biographical data cited above that have appeared in recent years, and focusing on this one incident as representative of the entire Celan-Heidegger dialogue, most readers have distorted the content of the poem and the entire relationship that preceded and followed it.

"Todtnauberg" and Its Aftermath, 1967–1968

Editors of one Celan edition point out that after leaving Freiburg the poet began making entries in his working notebook for a poem entitled "Todtnauberg" while in a train traveling to Frankfurt/Main on July 26.[1] Though he began at this time, almost all the notes, drafts, and the final version of the poem bear the notation "Frankfurt/Main, August 1, 1967,"[2] his last day in Germany before returning to Paris. The date is important because mentally he was still in the transformed, positive frame of mind that had astonished Kaschnitz and others he met during the few days he spent in Frankfurt. It is also critical for understanding the origins of a poem whose interpreters, with few exceptions, have read it as a condemnation or denunciation of Heidegger, as a bitter disappointment for Celan, as a failed dialogue between the two, or, most extremely, as a staged encounter in which Heidegger failed to pass the litmus test on his Nazi past that Celan had deviously administered to the unsuspecting thinker.[3] None of these intentions can be documented from any biographical sources produced at or around the time Celan wrote it, whereas statements to the contrary by those who met him in Frankfurt confirm that from his own accounts of this encounter, it had not been that kind of experience for him at all.

This all changed dramatically within a short time after he arrived back at his psychiatric clinic in Paris. The demons that had tormented him before his departure now returned and drew him back into the world of mental illness from which he was desperately seeking to escape. Among other things, he now sought relief by exploring alternative treatment without medication.[4] In the process the irreconcilable conflict he had struggled with for years—his attraction to Heidegger's thought and his repulsion at the thinker's activities in the Third Reich—not only resurfaced, but the tormenting ambivalence that marked much of his thinking in the last years of his life in general also radically altered his percep-

tion of what had happened in Freiburg and Todtnauberg. In his memoirs Baumann observes that whenever the poet was with Heidegger in person, the power of the thinker's presence caused his deep-seated distrust and reservations to retreat, only to resurface again after the two men parted.[5] This is probably what happened in Paris. To various friends Celan now described the encounter in words that would determine all future interpretations of the poem—his disappointment with their meeting, their lack of communication, and generally the sense of a failed encounter[6]—though nowhere does he suggest that his dialogue with Heidegger had ended, for clearly it had not, as further evidence will show.

Nor was this the only time in the last years of his life that Celan changed his story about an important encounter that took place outside Paris. On September 30, 1969, he made an eighteen-day trip to Israel that rejuvenated him briefly. Besides meeting childhood friends from Czernowitz who had survived the Holocaust and now welcomed him as something of a hero, he gave readings of his poetry; immersed himself in and reveled in his Jewish heritage as he visited historical sites; delivered a positive, almost enthusiastic, speech to the Hebrew Writers Association that proclaimed how his visit fulfilled a need;[7] and began a love affair with Ilana Shmueli, a woman who grew up with him in Czernowitz and now acted as his guide in Jerusalem. For most of his visit he apparently felt more secure and at peace with his surroundings than he had for years. But a sudden onset of unexplained psychological distress caused him to stop all activities and leave on October 17, three days earlier than planned. Nevertheless he wrote to Shmueli on October 21: "That Jerusalem would be a turning point, a caesura in my life—that I knew" (Dass Jerusalem eine Wende, eine Zäsur sein würde in meinem Leben—das wusste ich).[8] Based on Shmueli's recollection of their visit and on passages she cites from their correspondence during the remaining six months of his life, it would appear that for him the trip had been a positive experience, while the return to Paris was a huge letdown.

Though Shmueli might have downplayed his instability and stylized some aspects of the visit, Celan's own statement in a letter of October 21, 1969, about his frame of mind after returning to Paris can be taken at face value: "Jerusalem comforted me [cheered me up] and strengthened me. Paris depresses me, hollows me out" (Jerusalem hat mich aufgerichtet und gestärkt. Paris drückt mich nieder und höhlt mich aus).[9] As he did in describing his visit with Heidegger, however, he again changed his story after being back in Paris for a short time. According to Yves Bonnefoy, a close friend, he now described the trip to Israel as a "catastrophe" because, he claimed, he felt completely estranged while there.[10]

The tendency reflected in this account, as well as in his altered version of the encounter with Heidegger, was typical of the profound contradictions that marked much of what Celan said and did during the last three years of his troubled life.

Within a short time after returning to Paris, Celan's written references to his meeting with Heidegger generally assumed the same judgmental tone that friends reported hearing from him orally. The manner in which he now alluded to the thinker's past confirms how radically his memories of the visit had been displaced and revised. In a letter to Wurm on August 25, 1967, he asked him to accommodate Gerhard Neumann, who had asked Wurm for help in securing tapes of Celan's poetry readings, and referred to him as the "delightful person" who drove him to Heidegger's cabin, which he facetiously labels his "Denkhütte," literally his "thinker's hut" (ein reizender Mensch——er war es übrigens, der Heidegger und mich in die Denkhütte in [bzw. auf dem] Todtnauberg kutschierte).[11] Besides the pleasant memory of Neumann, who had not spoken much during their meeting, his wordplay on the thinker's cabin was not intended as a compliment but a jarring paradox with an implicit criticism. A "hut" is usually associated with the poor, whereas "thinking" is the domain of the educated. Was he accusing Heidegger of pretentiousness? Or was it an oblique reference to the importance of those who dwelled in modest circumstances, the "Volk" in Nazi ideology? Even more sardonic is his reference to Heidegger in a letter to Wurm of January 24, 1968, in which he asks advice on whether to give the poem "Todtnauberg" to an editor of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* for publication or to await an answer from the thinker: "Should I give it to him [the editor]? Or wait for an answer from 'the one from the mountain?'" (Soll ich's ihm geben? Oder ein Wort abwarten von "dem vom Berge?").[12] Although the phrase he set in quotation marks obviously refers to Heidegger and his cabin in the mountains, it had a sinister double meaning. Almost surely Celan was citing a term he had run across for Hitler's Reich Chancellery Group of close associates during the Nazi era who called themselves "those from the mountain" (die von dem Berg), an allusion to their privileged position that allowed them to be with Hitler in his Eagle's Nest on a mountain high above Berchtesgaden.[13]

Reading (into) the Poem "Todtnauberg"

As Wolfgang Emmerich points out, on the surface at least, the poem "Todtnauberg" is a set of "lyric stenographic notes" recording Celan's encounter with Heidegger.[14] It reads:

Arnica, Eyebright, the
drink from the well with the
star-die on top,

in the
cabin,

into the book
—whose name did it take in
before mine?—,
the line written into
this book about
a hope, today
for a thinker's
coming
word
in the heart,

woodland turf, unleveled
Orchis and Orchis, singly,

crudeness, later, while driving,
clearly,

the one driving us, the man
who hears it too,

the half-
trodden log-
paths on the mountain moor,
dampness,
much.
[Arnika, Augentrost, der
Trunk aus dem Brunnen mit dem
Sternwürfel drauf,

in der
Hütte,

die in das Buch
—wessen Namen nahms auf
vor dem meinen?—,
die in dies Buch
geschriebene Zeile von
einer Hoffnung, heute,
auf eines Denkenden
kommendes
Wort
im Herzen,

Waldwasen, uneingeebnet,
Orchis und Orchis, einzeln,

Krudes, später, im Fahren,
deutlich

der uns fährt, der Mensch,
der's mit anhört,

die halb-
beschrittenen Knüppel-
pfade im Hochmoor,
Feuchtes,
viel.] (GW 2:255–256)

Nearly all these "stenographic notes," which make up a single sentence, describe events or sights grounded in the realities of the visit. The arnica and eyebright were flowering plants growing in the meadows around the cabin. Near the cabin was a spring or well that caught Celan's attention. On top of the wooden structure surrounding the pipe and the drinking spout from the pipe that emptied into a trough was a four-cornered wooden star. Either one or both of the men drank water from the spring. The poet then repeats almost verbatim the words he wrote in the cabin guest book that asked what names have been entered there before his. He might have been referring to students Heidegger invited to his cabin beginning in 1933 for discussions and indoctrination sessions on Nazi ideology or to other Nazi colleagues who joined the thinker there. In a broader sense he also might have been thinking of philosophers and admirers from all over the world,

such as his own friend René Char, who made the pilgrimage to Todtnauberg after World War II to visit this internationally recognized thinker.

The hope for a "coming word" in the philosopher's heart in the next stanza coincides with what Celan wrote his wife on August 2, 1967—his desire that Heidegger write and publish some of the words about his Nazi past that he had spoken to Celan during their visit so that they could be employed in efforts to combat neo-Nazism in Germany.

The following section describes forest meadows and the orchis flowers they see growing there "singly," rather than in bunches, followed by a description of "crudeness" in a conversation overheard by their chauffeur. The poem concludes by mentioning "half-trodden log paths" leading to the mountain moor they tried to reach. These "log paths" (Knüppelpfade) used small transversely laid logs to make it possible for people to walk through swampy or marshy areas without sinking. Heavy rain and ooze forced their party to turn back without reaching their goal, thus leaving the paths "half-trodden." The "dampness" mentioned in the closing line describes these inclement conditions without further comment. These, then, are some basic "data" about the poem's content.

Data in almost any good poem, and especially in Celan, a master of multiple meanings and wordplays that intentionally trigger a variety of associations, can be read in various ways. One problem with almost all interpretations of "Todtnauberg" is that instead of exploring its multiple, sometimes contradictory meanings, interpreters often reduce rather than expand the poem's possibilities by subscribing to the intentionalist fallacy later set in motion by Celan himself, though there is not a bit of evidence that a scathing judgment of Heidegger was his intention at the time he wrote the poem. By accepting this later revised version of his meeting with Heidegger, which was clouded by the poet's unstable and fragile mental state, and by interpreting the poem to be intended solely as his reckoning with this unrepentant ex-Nazi, they superimpose on it a meaning derived from Celan's supposed intention, a dangerous practice in literary interpretation generally, especially when information about the author's intention is contradictory. And despite the paucity and inaccuracy of biographical data until the mid-1990s, they read the poem almost completely from the basis of limited biographical information and apply an anti-Nazi template to it that closes off possibilities that do not fit the template. With few exceptions the results have been reductionist readings. A few examples, often passed on from one reader to the next, will illustrate this tendency.

Some interpreters associate the title, a place-name in the Black Forest, with the Organization Todt, a Nazi construction firm named after Fritz Todt, the cre-

ator of Hitler's autobahns, who later supervised the building of major military fortifications and concentration camps and ultimately became the Nazi minister of armaments and war production. Arnica, the plant that appears as the first word in the poem, produces bright yellow flowers. Some readers have associated them with the yellow star of David that Jews were forced to wear in the Nazi period,[15] suggesting that Celan opens the poem with a conscious allusion to the Holocaust. But the color yellow can have many associations, and initially in most ghettos after the outbreak of World War II, the armbands where blue and white. *Eyebright*, the second word in the poem, occurs only one other time in his poetry—in the September 1942 poem "Autumn" (Herbst) that he wrote while he was in a Nazi labor camp.[16] The implication is that his seeing this plant in Todtnauberg suddenly evoked tormented memories of his sufferings at that time. By analogy it is suggested that he used it here to accuse and confront Heidegger with a past of which he had not repented.[17]

There is a problem with this reading of the word *eyebright*. His early poem where it occurs describes the misery of fellow labor camp inmates in his work detail when they were building roads in 1942. But they do not see the eyebright. Instead, the poem claims that in their harsh existence they miss seeing it (Wimpern und Lid vermissen den Augentrost), a suggestion that there is no sign of this flower that might offer them consolation in their desolate circumstances (the German word *Augentrost* literally means "consolation for the eyes"). In a letter to his wife from Switzerland in 1962, where he again describes seeing eyebright, he writes that he has mentioned this flower to her often. He reports that the flower he now sees reminds him of a specific labor camp experience in 1942, when he was sent with two buckets to fetch either water or soup (he does not remember which) when he encountered this flowering plant.[18] Taken together, these passages suggest that for him eyebright evoked a moment of consolation, the possibility of a brief encounter with something beautiful in a desolate emotional setting rather than an unmitigated harrowing memory of the Nazi period.

Reading the poem as an accusation against Heidegger for his silence about the Holocaust has also misled some interpreters into making other very free associations in order to fit the anti-Nazi template. The wooden star-die above the well, for example, reminds some of the star of David, though photos make it clear that it had only four points (or eight), not six. For others, the "woodland turf, unleveled" evokes visions of cemeteries and their sometimes uneven terrain. Since the archaic word *Wasen* also designates a place where the carcasses and hides of animals were disposed of by a knacker, critics by association have suggested that what Celan had in mind with these forest meadows was really the death camps.[19]

Many have also applied the Auschwitz template to the term for "log paths" (Knüppelpfade). Seizing on other legitimate meanings of the term *Knüppel*—namely, stick, club, bludgeon (police when Celan was growing up carried "Knüppel")—they associate it with the sticks or clubs used to beat inmates in concentration and death camps.[20]

Certainly there is validity in some of these associations, for Celan's poetry thrives on ambiguity and multivalence. But associations of this sort are also problematic because they presuppose what the author had in mind with his poem, which for most interpreters of "Todtnauberg" was to condemn Heidegger. This intentionalist fallacy also tends to fix single meanings to the exclusion of all others, whereas "Todtnauberg" is as rich in multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings as almost any poem Celan wrote.

"Todtnauberg" from Other Perspectives

If a reader disregards the intention imputed to Celan in writing this poem and views it as something other than a failed conversation with Heidegger, different perspectives emerge. Like "Todtnauberg," a number of other poems employ place-names as titles—"Kermorvan," "In Prague," "Pau, at Night," "Pau, Later," "Lyon, the Archers," "Highgate," and others—or they mention place-names within the poem. But in contrast to those poems, where place-names serve to evoke reflections on matters suggested by historical events connected with the name, this poem (except for the third stanza) does not react overtly to or reflect on the historical significance of the place or events connected with it. It consists of a series of simple descriptive statements without commentary or reflection. The reader does not know what the poetic voice thinks about them, if they are important, or why, since the statements are factual, freestanding, and without commentary.

On January 30, 1968, six months after meeting Heidegger, Celan wrote to Werner Weber, editor of the literary section of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and a trusted friend, about possibly publishing "Todtnauberg" in that newspaper. In his letter he declares his partial intention in writing the poem: "'Todtnauberg' attempts, in an imperfect way, I know, to register an encounter and a conversation with Martin Heidegger. (*Not* to register it after it came to this, I'm sure you understand, was impossible for me)" ("Todtnauberg" versucht, auf, wie ich weiß, unvollkommene Weise, eine Begegnung und ein Gespräch mit Martin Heidegger festzuhalten. [Dies nachdem es dazu gekommen war, *nicht* festzuhalten, war mir, Sie verstehen mich gewiss, nicht möglich]).[21] If Celan had intended that his

poem be one of judgment, resentment, or disappointment, it seems odd that he says nothing about it here. In his own words his intention is that the poem document his visit, nothing more. The operative word, used twice, is *festhalten*, meaning to register or put on record. It is a precise description of what most of the statements in the poem do—in detached, impersonal fashion they register sights and events related to his encounter and conversation with Heidegger. It seems that among other things, the poet considered it to be a record of what he hoped would be viewed later as an epoch-making encounter, a "January 20th" for him. On one level this registering of sights and events is precisely what most of "Todtnauberg" does. It could be argued that this, like many of his later poems, simply records phenomena as they are. If one reads these poems from the antimetaphorical perspective that Celan insisted on in many notes for his "Meridian" speech, one might even say that often there is no relation between what is represented and some metaphoric meaning and that much of this poem might, in fact, be avoiding this type of conventional representation.

Besides this act of registering phenomena while apparently negating or undermining their typical representational function, which is a characteristic of many later poems, "Todtnauberg" sets itself apart in another way. Again with the possible exception of the third stanza, it does not address a Thou. Dozens of studies have examined the thrust of many of Celan's poems to enter into a dialogue with a Thou.[22] Sometimes the lyric voice in his poems addresses plants, flowers, trees, or inanimate objects. Sometimes it is language itself. And sometimes it speaks to identifiable persons, either living or dead, such as Celan's son, his wife, his mother, those who perished in the Holocaust, or other addressees. This does not seem to be the case here. If this poem were intended as a dialogue with Heidegger, it seems odd that it is not directed to him and that the word *Thou* is absent. In fact, explicit or implicit elements of poetic dialogue found in other Celan poems are completely missing here. Instead, except for stanza 3 it is structured as a series of reflections on Heidegger's person, his personal life, and his works, all of which center on the hope expressed in stanza 3 for a forthcoming word from the thinker. Since the poem was about a visit with Heidegger, an indirect address is implicit, for Celan later sent the first published version of the poem to him and clearly wanted him to read it. It only means that he intended it as something other than a dialogue.

Stanza 3, which differs from the others in several ways, forms the center of the poem's vision. In a sense it duplicates what surrounding stanzas do because it also registers in a detached manner the content of the entry in the guest book. But it is different because for the first and only time an "I" is heard, a poetic voice

with distinct personal concerns, though it also disappears again quickly. It begins to speak as though it might be addressing a Thou by asking a question about whose names were entered in the cabin guest book before the speaker's. But at best it appears to be a rhetorical exercise, given that its question is addressed to no one in particular and the voice requests no answer. Technically the stanza shows no other semantic or grammatical signs of being a dialogue or a conversation. The living being here who is writing from "the angle of inclination of his very Dasein, his creatureliness"[23] may desire an answer from an unidentified thinker, but that thinker, who is not addressed, exists here only in the third person. And yet this stanza produces definite clues as to his identity.

By duplicating two distinct features of Heidegger's unique language, and without engaging him in conversation, this stanza further reveals how the poem is talking *about* him instead of *with* him. The poetic voice speaks with detachment, not engagement with an Other. Rather than using the common German word for thinker (Denker), which he easily might have done, Celan chooses a substantive formed from a gerund (der Denkende). He is probably less interested in the semantic difference between a "thinker" and "the thinking one" denoted by the two terms than in echoing Heidegger's own habit of forming large numbers of nouns from gerunds, a feature that permeates his writings. Probably this imitation was intended neither as flattery nor as criticism but as a hint about the identity of the "thinking one" of whom he wrote. A second, less obvious, reference is the wish for this thinking one's "coming word" in the heart. In 1953, while reading Heidegger's *Explications of Hölderlin's Poetry*, Celan first discovered the importance of "that which is to come" (das Kommende) in Heidegger, a term that he encountered repeatedly in noun and adjectival variations throughout the thinker's works. In 1954 he also read in Löwith's book on Heidegger that the thinker's thought generally "was directed toward that which is to come."[24] Using the phrase "a thinker's coming word," so characteristic of Heidegger's diction, seems to be another clear hint about the identity of the person being described.

The speaker's desire in the third stanza, though indirect, is specific. Despite expressing curiosity about the names that appeared in the guest book before his, this is not his main concern. He desires instead that what he wrote in the guest book—his hope for a forthcoming word in the heart of a thinker—might be fulfilled. By conflating the conversations they had before, during, and after the visit to the cabin into this single statement of hope, this part of the poem indirectly becomes a record of those conversations. A statement Celan made in a letter to his wife of August 2, 1967, the day after he wrote "Todtnauberg," adds a dimen-

sion to this hope for a thinker's "coming word in the heart." There he hoped explicitly that Heidegger would commit to writing (and presumably publish) whatever it was he told the poet while they were together. If, as Celan's behavior and statements to friends indicates, Heidegger's answers to his questions transformed him as they did, and if one reads these lines biographically, then the hope expressed in the poem is not for Heidegger to make a private confession or explain his complicity—apparently he had already done that sufficiently to satisfy Celan, at least for the moment. It was instead that he act on these words uttered in private by making them public in order to help fight neofascism in his own country. Given Heidegger's stature in postwar Germany, this "coming word" from the thinker would have an impact far beyond that of almost any other single voice from the Nazi era. This, then, is the hope expressed in the poem—that the word of remorse or regret or recognition of an error that the poet himself apparently had heard articulated might be translated into audible words that would reach a broad German audience.

Critics have pointed out that by word count in German, the center of the poem occurs in the term *word*, a visual representation for the centrality of the hoped-for word from Heidegger. Two other stanzas also refer indirectly but unmistakably to "words." These, however, are not words the speaker hopes to hear from Heidegger later, but actual words uttered during the drive after they visited the cabin—presumably the ones exchanged in their conversation about his role in the Nazi era. The content of their conversation is summarized in a single, puzzling German word—"that which is crude" (Krudes), the only time Celan uses the word in all his poems. At first glance it seems incongruent that two men whose language mastery of German was surpassed by few others in their century would lapse into crudities. But if one considers the word's older sense of "blunt, unadorned, undisguised, raw"—and both men had a propensity for citing words with archaic meanings—its congruity with the apparent candor of their conversation becomes obvious. The poem expands on the nature of their exchange by further modifying its contents with the word *clearly* or *distinctly* (deutlich), the same one Celan used when he wrote to Wurm on August 7 about the meeting with Heidegger and the "very clear conversation" (ein recht deutliches Gespräch) they carried on about Heidegger's complicity with the Nazis.[25] Like so much else in this poem, Celan describes here what happened with what at first seems to be indirection but is precise in its own way.

In an unusual and seemingly gratuitous line, the poem then notes that the driver who overhears them is a "Mensch," a seemingly obvious statement if the word is translated only as a "man." But in German *Mensch* is not used to desig-

nate a male, which suggests that its presence here has another purpose. Its extended meaning in this context seems to come close to the Yiddish term for an admirable, genuine human being. Celan's August 25, 1967, letter to Franz Wurm cited above uses a similar formulation when referring to Neumann, their driver. There, too, he calls him "a delightful human being" (ein reizender Mensch). But what bearing does this emphasis on the chauffeur's human qualities have on the conversation between the two? And if it has none, why does the poem mention him? Though speculative, a possible answer is that he is described this way because this genuine human being was an authentic witness who participated in, grasped, and could confirm what Celan had heard from Heidegger. This type of unimpeachable witness, it seems, was important to the speaker.

In contrast to almost all readings of "Todtnauberg," the foregoing explication argues that the poem is not a dialogue with Heidegger, real or imagined. Instead, it should be viewed as a poetic report by Celan of his visit with the thinker and of attendant impressions, sights, and conversation. Further, the main thrust of the poem is not to condemn Heidegger, to criticize him, to dwell on or lament their failed conversation, or to give voice to disappointment. Rather it is to express hope that the literal conversation they began will bear a specific kind of fruit. Within this frame of reference, other elements of the poem take on a different light if one interprets the poem metaphorically, as almost all readers to this point have done. Arnica and eyebright, herbs with known healing qualities (arnica for sprains and bruises, eyebright for eye ailments), suggest not only hope for physical healing. They also might be taken as allusions to the temporary healing of the mind that the conversation with Heidegger helped bring about in Celan or an expression of hope for the broader healing that a public statement from Heidegger could produce.

The drink from the fountain and the star-die above it evoke two of Celan's most frequently used images—water and stars. With rare exceptions water in its various forms—the sea, a fountain, a river—is a positive image often associated with the subconscious, with memory, with life, and with survival.[26] Broadly construed, it is congruent with the theme of hope in this poem. The drink mentioned in the opening lines, for example, is something that can provide relief and rejuvenation. Even the final lines that refer to the dampness of the rainy day might be related to the topic, since they contain an implicit allusion to the gloom or despair that sometimes precedes (or follows) hope. While this "dampness" could also be read as an image for a failed encounter, the opposite sense is also possible within the larger context of the poem. Because stars, too, are often connected with hope in Celan's poetry, the star-die above the fountain might be

seen as another image in support of the poem's central theme. Some interpreters have viewed the two orchis flowers (members of the orchid family) as symbolic of the two participants in the conversation, for each stands alone. But as bright spots in a green forest meadow, these magenta and white flowers also might be seen as further visual emblems of brightness in an overcast or rainy setting, a reflection of the general mood created by the poem when read as an expression of hope.

Critics point out that another term almost surely plays on the title of one of Heidegger's works—the formulation *Knüppelpfade,* meaning paths made of sticks or small logs on which they walked, a neologism Celan coined in analogy to the attested form *Knüppeldamm* (a corduroy road). When reduced to its basic meaning of "paths made of wood" or "wooden paths," this description corresponds closely to a German noun Heidegger used as the title of one of his recent works—*Holzwege,* a German term that literally means "wooden paths," though its technical meaning in forestry is different.[27] An earlier version of this word that reads *Knüppelwege* supports the argument that in creating this partially new word, which he drew from their walk together toward a mountain moor, Celan was consciously alluding to this work by his conversation partner. This, too, illustrates how a reading that reduces the word to the clubs used in death camps closes off the multiple meanings inherent in this poem.

In helping us to grasp the Celan-Heidegger relationship, this poem has had a largely negative effect. Most scholars have (mis)used it to generalize incorrectly about a productive intellectual, artistic, and personal relationship that spanned many years and was far more nuanced and multifaceted than this poem alone suggests. Furthermore, they have approached it from the outside by superimposing supposed biographical information on the poem, most of it incomplete or inaccurate. Had they engaged it without these preconceived notions, more enlightened readings might have emerged. But out of ignorance or disregard for Celan's sharply contradictory oral statements about his visit with Heidegger, they have taken at face value only the view that it is a statement of accusation and censure. In short, they have treated it as they would a letter or journal entry. On one level, of course, it might be considered a biographical document. But it is also an artistic creation with language, and its complex account of their conversation and sights and events connected with their meeting contains far more than the kind of reductive readings described above.

A notable exception to these critics is Axel Gellhaus, one of Celan's best-informed, most sensitive readers. In 2002 he published a nuanced, multilayered interpretation that breaks with earlier reductionist tendencies and produces an

original, convincing new reading. In an early version of this poem, Celan began with a citation from the famous Hölderlin poem "Celebration of Freedom" (Friedensfeier) that Heidegger had explicated and knew well. This line, which he deleted from subsequent drafts, reads, "Since we have been a conversation" (Seit ein Gespräch wir sind).[28] From this and other internal evidence, Gellhaus concludes that the poem was originally intended for Heidegger as a reader, though it does not address him directly, and that it was designed to draw a response from him. In it Gellhaus sees numerous "correspondences" to aspects of Heidegger's thought that the thinker would have easily recognized. To illustrate how Celan attempts to speak to Heidegger by drawing on the thinker's own language and worldview, Gellhaus uses Heidegger's notion of the "four-fold" as the basis for his reading.[29]

Celan had read in various essays of Heidegger's "four-fold": heaven, earth, immortals, and mortals. Gellhaus notes that three of these four elements have correspondences in "Todtnauberg." Heaven, for example, is suggested by the star above the well; the earth is represented by the flowers, plants, and features of the landscape; and humans are present in the "we" who make the trip in a car, as well as their driver, who is called a "Mensch." Absent, however, are the immortals. In their place, claims Gellhaus, Celan sets another group that Gellhaus refers to as "those who dwell in the underworld" (die Unterirdischen). These, of course, are his Jewish dead. In reconstituting Heidegger's "four-fold" with these correspondences, Celan addressed the thinker in his own terms, which he probably thought would be easily understood.[30]

Pointing to other writings that Celan knew, Gellhaus also claims that Heidegger easily would have recognized the poem's expressed hope for "a coming word" as part of his own system of thought about "that which is to come."[31] Further, he sees correspondences between Heidegger's elaboration on Hölderlin's formulation of "words like flowers" (Worte wie Blumen), which Heidegger had elaborated on in his works, and the flowers mentioned in this poem. As in Heidegger, these, too, were symbols of what is silent but has the potential for expression in language.[32] Gellhaus agrees with critics who see the reference to the "log paths" as a direct play on the title of Heidegger's *Wrong Paths,* and he thinks the word *Waldwasen* (woodland paths) might be a sarcastic play on the German *Wesen* (essence), another of the thinker's frequently used words.[33] He also allows the various allusions to the death camps but does not see them as the central concern of the poem. Instead he reads the poem as a statement inviting the thinker to respond to what the two men had begun to discuss during their visit. This brief sketch of Gellhaus's arguments illustrates how a well-informed reader has bro-

ken out of the narrow range of interpretation that has limited the understanding of this poem.

A Bibliophile Edition of "Todtnauberg" and Heidegger's Response

In November 1967 Celan arranged with Robert Altmann, a Parisian publisher, to print a bibliophile edition of his poem "Todtnauberg."[34] It appeared on January 12, 1968, in an expensive limited edition of fifty numbered copies that were intended for bibliophiles and for libraries—it was not made available for commercial sale. On the day it appeared, Celan had the first numbered copy sent to Heidegger.[35]

Shortly after receiving it, and perhaps as a reaction to Celan's poem, whose title called attention to a place dear to him, Heidegger, too, wrote a poem that reflects on events there. Calling it "Foreword to the Poem 'Todtnauberg'" ("Vorwort zum Gedicht 'Todtnauberg'"), the place-name and time of origin have suggested to some that he wrote it as a direct response to Celan's "Todtnauberg."[36] But except for the place-name, the two poems have little in common. Heidegger's "Foreword to the Poem 'Todtnauberg'" makes no apparent attempt to address the content of Celan's poem. It speaks instead of memories connected with his own family, his friends who visited him there, his thinking, and the solitude it offered for his writing. And the "you" addressed in the poem is clearly his wife, Elfride, an architect by training who conceived the idea of the cabin and had it built.[37] In addition, his portrayal of the idyllic landscape and the depiction of his own children playing there seem intended to celebrate some of the memories it held for him. And its concluding lines contain a brief reflection on the difference between mere "words" and authentic language, a topic that had occupied his thinking for years. Receiving Celan's poem might have prompted him to reflect on this place, but at best Heidegger's poem can be read only as a reaction to Celan's poem in the broadest sense rather than as a direct answer.

It is possible that Celan had sent this bibliophile edition of "Todtnauberg" to Heidegger as an act of gratitude for the three books the thinker had given him during their visit a few months earlier. But probably he also had something else in mind. He wanted to remind Heidegger of a hoped-for word about the matters they had discussed in Todtnauberg. In his letter of January 30, 1968, cited above, he revealed this intention to Werner Weber, editor of the cultural section of the Swiss newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, when explaining why he was not yet ready to allow Weber to publish the poem: "I have sent a copy of the poem to

Martin Heidegger—whether he will respond is questionable. But I believe that publishing it in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* which, in spite of everything, is perhaps premature, might be detrimental to the directness of discourse" (Nun habe ich Martin Heidegger das Gedicht geschickt—ob er darauf eingeht, bleibt fraglich. Aber ich glaube, ich würde durch eine—vielleicht trotz allem vorzeitige—Veröffentlichung in der *Neuen Zürcher Zeitung* der Unmittelbarkeit der Rede Abbruch tun). The "directness of discourse" he intended by sending the poem to Heidegger before publishing it in an international newspaper makes it clear that he expected or hoped it would elicit an answer from him. If the meeting in Todtnauberg had been as disastrous as critics have claimed it was, he would have had no reason to continue the dialogue they had begun there. Yet this gift was clearly an attempt to do just that. In hoping to push Heidegger into a reply, Celan also must have believed that the recipient would understand the specific reference to the poem's hope for the thinker's "coming word in the heart" and respond to it by expressing publicly what he had told him in private.

The version of "Todtnauberg" that Celan had completed on August 1, 1967, contains a single word that he dropped from the poem when it first appeared publicly in the volume *Light Compulsion* in 1970. To reflect the urgency he felt about an immediate response from Heidegger, this adverb spoke of his hope for the thinker's

un-
delayed coming
word
in the heart.
[*un-*
gesäumt kommendes
Wort
im Herzen.]

Its presence in the bibliophile edition of "Todtnauberg" he sent to Heidegger can be construed as an urgent personal appeal to fulfill that hope. That hope, however, never materialized. Less than two years later, while preparing the collection of poems called *Light Compulsion* for publication, Celan deleted the word *undelayed* from the poem's text. He must have realized that an "undelayed" word from Heidegger condemning Nazism or speaking of the philosopher's Nazi past would not be forthcoming. His awareness came in part through a letter Heidegger had written thanking him for the bibliophile edition of "Todtnauberg."

The thinker's complete answer of January 30, 1968—the only letter by Heidegger to Celan that has been preserved—reads:

How can I thank you for this grand, unexpected gift?

The poet's word that says "Todtnauberg," names place and landscape, where thinking attempted a step back into what is limited [restricted? insignificant?]—the poet's word that is at the same time encouragement and admonition and preserves the memory of a day of various moods in the Black Forest.

But it already happened with the initial greetings in the hotel on the evening of your unforgettable reading.

Since then we have exchanged a good deal of mutual silence.

I think that someday some of it will be redeemed from unspokenness through conversation.

I shall have a book-binder make an appropriate protective casing in which your gift can be preserved in a fitting manner.

The photo of the cabin, taken by our eldest son, is not an illustration, but limited help for a poeticizing glance into the winterly loneliness.

I must thank you, too, for the French translation of Stifter. It is proof that a translation here is impossible, and that the texts were selected at the time according to current ideas.

A copy of *Track Markings* is being sent you by separate mail. I am including a separate dedicatory page that you can paste in it.

A debilitating virus from which I am recovering slowly prevented me from expressing to you my heartfelt thanks earlier than now.

And my wishes?

That at the appropriate hour you will hear the language in which what is to come forth as poetry speaks to you.

In friendly remembrance

Your

Martin Heidegger

[Wie soll ich Ihnen für dieses unerwartete große Geschenk danken?

Das Wort des Dichters, das "Todtnauberg" sagt, Ort und Landschaft nennt, wo ein Denken den Schritt zurück ins Geringe versuchte—das Wort des Dichters, das Ermunterung und Mahnung zugleich ist und das Andenken an einen vielfältig gestimmten Tag im Schwarzwald aufbewahrt.

Aber es geschah schon am Abend Ihrer unvergesslichen Lesung beim ersten Grüssen im Hotel. Seitdem haben wir Vieles einander zugeschwiegen.

Ich denke, dass einiges noch eines Tages im Gespräch aus dem Ungesprochenen gelöst wird.

Ich werde mir von einem Buchbinder einen geeigneten Schuber machen lassen, darin Ihre Gabe in gebührender Weise verwahrt bleibt.

Das Bild von der Hütte, von unserem älteren Sohn aufgenommen, möchte keine Illustration, sondern nur eine kleine Hilfe sein für den dichtenden Blick in die winterliche Einsamkeit.

Nun muss ich Ihnen danken für das Exemplar der französischen Stifter-Übersetzung. Sie ist ein Zeichen dafür, dass eine Übersetzung hier unmöglich ist und dass man damals nach gängigen Vorstellungen die Texte auswählte.

Die "Wegmarken" gehen Ihnen gesondert zu. Ich lege ein Widmungsblatt bei, das Sie einkleben können.

Eine heftige Grippe, von der ich mich langsam erhole, hinderte mich, Ihnen früher, als es jetzt geschieht, meinen herzlichen Dank zu sagen.

Und meine Wünsche?

Dass Sie zur gegebenen Stunde die Sprache hören, in der sich Ihnen das zu Dichtende zusagt.

In freundschaftlichem Gedenken

Ihr

Martin Heidegger]

A few days later in a separate package Celan received the promised copy of *Track Markings,* a handwritten dedication on a separate sheet, and a winter photo of Heidegger's cabin. The dedication to *Track Markings* reads:

For
Paul Celan
with heartfelt wishes
Martin Heidegger
Freiburg
Br. On January 30, 1968.
[Für Paul Celan
mit herzlichen Wünschen
Martin Heidegger
Freiburg
Br. am 30. Januar 1968]

The message on the back of the postcard reads, "For Paul Celan / in remembrance / Martin Heidegger (Für Paul Celan / zur Erinnerung / Martin Heidegger).

The cordial, appreciative tone of the letter itself suggests that Heidegger was genuinely touched by Celan's thoughtful, expensive gift. It contains no hint that their encounter six months earlier was less than positive. In fact, the opposite seems to have been true. While he openly acknowledged that since their meeting they

had exchanged a good deal of mutual silence, he places it in the context of the conversation that began then and expresses the hope that one day some of what for both remained unsaid would then be "redeemed from unspokenness through conversation." This, then, was an invitation to continue their dialogue. The closing sentence also must have flattered the poet, for his wish that Celan, too, might hear the "speaking-to-him" of language as he had explicated it in his writings on the poetry of Hölderlin, Trakl, and Rilke put Celan in very select company. For someone with Heidegger's sense of propriety, his signing the letter "in friendly remembrance" was also more than an empty phrase. It suggests that he, at least, now viewed their relationship as one of friendship, one that began in Todtnauberg.

Yet at least one element in the letter must have disappointed Celan. Heidegger's response leaves little doubt that he read and understood the poem and its call for a public response. Besides noting that it preserved "the memory of a day of various moods in the Black Forest," he also grasped the hope it expressed for an "undelayed word" from him. Referring to the stanza in the poem where this adverb occurs, he notes that the "poet's word" he finds there is at the same time "encouragement and admonition" (Ermunterung und Mahnung). In legal language the German *Mahnung*—translated variously as "admonition," "exhortation," and "warning"—is used in the context of requiring performance or accountability. Almost certainly Heidegger understood what Celan was encouraging him to do, but for whatever reason, his letter did not venture to do it, and he gives no hint that he intended to write or publish anything about it in the future. Thus his letter was not the "undelayed coming word" that Celan had hoped for but a new installment in the silence that had preceded "Todtnauberg" and that he thought Heidegger had broken when they met.

In spite of this, their relationship was far from over. Baumann, who saw the poet often during the last two years of Celan's life, describes his wildly fluctuating moods, his unpredictable behavior, and his internal isolation. Yet he claims, "He continued his relationship to Heidegger with a distance that allowed closeness, and a closeness that allowed the distance to be recognized."[38] Those who claim or imply that their encounter in Freiburg and Todtnauberg was a bitter disappointment for Celan, and that it opened an inseparable breach between the two men (it has even been claimed that they broke off further contact),[39] must explain why each continued to discuss the other with friends and why Celan would continue to read and mark Heidegger's works. And though Celan's ambivalence toward Heidegger became more pronounced as his mental illness progressed, those critics must offer reasons why Heidegger and Celan met two more times in Freiburg before the poet took his own life in April 1970.

Heidegger's Thought and Language in Celan

Similarities, Affinities, Borrowings

Before we look at the final two years of this real and imagined dialogue, I want to take a brief detour to illustrate Celan's ongoing attraction to Heidegger after the poet's alleged disappointment over their meeting in Todtnauberg. Despite Celan's mental illness, his poetry continued even in this period to use diction that showed unmistakable similarities to Heidegger's. It seems appropriate to look at this overall phenomenon and make a few generalizations about some of their shared language traits.

With a few exceptions writers such as Goethe, Schiller, and the romantics have added more new words to the German language than any single social or cultural group. The philosopher Heidegger was one of those exceptions. He probably contributed more coinages to the German lexicon than any person except Goethe. Schöfer's study of his writings between 1925 and 1929 alone counts nearly two hundred neologisms, a number that does not include creative meanings and idiosyncratic twists Heidegger assigned to conventional lexical items.[1] Never mind that critics find some of them strained, contrived, grotesque, outrageous, and ideologically suspect.[2] Caught up in the thinking of his age, he was determined to revolutionize traditional philosophy by inflicting violence on its most fundamental tool. Thus he dislocated and decentered significant portions of the language that both destabilized and revitalized much intellectual discourse. After Heidegger, German was never the same.

Celan recognized and sensed a strong kinship with this revolutionary tendency, for he set about to do much the same thing. But his motivation was different. As a German-language poet he sensed deeply that the Third Reich had debased and almost destroyed his mother tongue. Therefore he assaulted and

defamiliarized it in the hope of rejuvenating it and re-creating it. Jed Rasula overstates the case but makes this point when he notes, "With Celan, the German language itself becomes the means of its own disembodiment. In his hands, more and more of the language simply goes up in smoke."[3] Given their similar roles as language innovators, the question arises about possible similarities or affinities, or how much of Celan's usage might have been indebted to Heidegger. Circumstantial evidence beyond what has been mentioned in earlier chapters suggests that a good deal of it was.

Their shared language habits reflect an unusually high number of affinities, which might be explained by Heidegger's strong attraction to poetry already evident in his youth, his own lifelong efforts to write poems of his own, and his view of himself as a language creator. In fact, van Buren claims that "Heidegger's authorship actually began not in philosophy, but in theology and poetry,"[4] and Hannah Arendt in 1964 insisted that for all his brilliance as a thinker, Heidegger was also "a poet."[5]

In his analysis of Heidegger's language, Schöfer describes various unusual literary tactics that correspond to the poetic practices Celan later brought into play in his poetry. One was to revive authentic words once attested in German that had fallen from usage and now seemed strange, words such as *Begegnis, Zeitigung,* and *Unkraft.*[6] Celan duplicated this practice by also using untranslatable but no longer current words such as *Zwischenlaut* (*GW* 2:151), *Gehugnis* (*GW* 2:327), *ichten* (*GW* 2:107), or the composite noun *Meingedicht* (*GW* 2:31), which revitalized an archaic usage of the term *mein.* Another was the quasi-literary move by Heidegger to create composite nouns from existing words in new, often incongruous or paradoxical noun combinations such as *Weltmäßigkeit, Menschending,* and *Hinausstand.* Among numerous examples in Celan, one also finds many paradoxical composite nouns such as *Schlafpfad* (*GW* 2:189), *Torforgel* (*GW* 2:309), and *Schneepart* (*GW* 2:345).

Another similar feature was their idiosyncratic practice of producing incongruous, or at least unconventional, usages by appending to known words conventional suffixes that destabilized conventional meaning. Heidegger often used the suffix *-haft* to achieve this effect, as in "das Nichthafte," "das Umhafte," and "das Vorhafte." Celan produced equally startling word combinations by using adjectives as suffixes, as in *sandhörige* (*GW* 2:140), *pupillenhörige* (*GW* 2:179), *seelenhell* (*GW* 1:225), or *südhell* (*GW* 2:28). And in his experimentation with negating prefixes, Celan nearly matched Heidegger, who used the German *ent-, miss-, un-,* and *ver-* prefixes almost prodigally to alter existing terms or create new ones such as *Entweltlichung, Unbegriff,* and *verräumlichen.* In more than 650

Celan poems released for publication during his life, the *ent-* prefix occurs more than 110 times, the negating prefix *un-* more than 200 times, and the *ver-* prefix more than 350 times.

Nor was this all. Besides making nouns or adverbs function as verbs, another of Heidegger's favorite moves was to shift or replace conventional signification with his own meanings, as in *Ekstase, Ereignis,* or *Lichtung,* or even to reverse known lexical definitions, as he did with *Verfallen* and *Ent-fernung.* His delight in manipulating words with inherent double meanings according to the placement of the accent was illustrated earlier in his use of *übersetzen* (see chapter 5). Heinrich Petzet reports that he even went so far as to change words while proofreading his texts in order to create intentional ambiguities.[7] Celan, too, was a master of these practices. He often transformed nouns into ambiguous adjectives or verbs, as in *beleumunden* (*GW* 2:379), or created multivalent coinages like *erschwiegen* (*GW* 1:138) or *die Geschneete* (*GW* 2:363), or he unlocked multiple meanings in obscure attested words, as in *seelenblind* (*GW* 2:183), *Lichtsinn* (*GW* 1:167), or *Sprachgitter* (*GW* 1:167).

Heidegger became notorious for creating serious or trivial puns or wordplays. Celan was even more of an inveterate punster, an oft-overlooked trait in this deadly serious poet. One sees his wit and punning in correspondence with friends; in children's rhyme that was admittedly playful, such as "Großes Geburtstagsblaublau mit Reimzeug und Assonanz" (*GW* 3:134); and in serious poems built almost entirely on puns and wordplays such as "Huhediblu" (*GW* 1:275; same title in English) and "Eine Gauner-und Ganovenweise" (*GW* 1:229). Probably because of these complex wordplays, none of these poems has been translated completely into English.[8]

Heidegger also expanded meanings by his imaginative punctuation. Besides his innovative employment of the colon, or of the unfinished thought or phrase ending in an ellipsis, he produced new implications or meanings for words by using dashes and hyphens to reduce them to their component parts—*Ent-sprechung, Unter-schied,* and *das Frag-würdigste.* Celan, too, set colons, ellipses, dashes, and hyphens in ways that opened up new possibilities of multivalence. In a virtually untranslatable passage from "Huhediblu" two colons, a hyphen, and a dash create a complex wordplay that involves visual, audio, and semantic elements:

> this here, this:
> dis-
> parate matter—: When
> does it bloom, the When[9]

[dies hier, dies:
Dis-
parates—: Wann
blüht es, das Wann] (*GW* 1:275)

And the final lines of "No More Sand Art" (Keine Sandkunst mehr) use dashes (or hyphens?) in place of ellipses to suggest a Heideggerian presence of an absence:

Deepinsnow.
Eepinnow.
E-i-o.[10]
[Tiefimschnee,
Iefimnee,
I-i-e.] (*GW* 2:39)

This incomplete list illustrates some of the strong similarities in the destabilizing language play characteristic of each writer. By avoiding or subverting normal predication and simultaneously creating multivalent meanings, each, it seems, was attempting to win back for language some of the possibilities it had lost in traditional philosophy and poetry.

Heideggerian Concepts in Celan's Poetry

In chapter 5 I gave an account of how Celan openly acknowledged borrowing from Heidegger's reflections on the two meanings of the German *übersetzen* that depended on the placement of the accent and how he translated (or transported) them into several of his own poems. But such admissions were rare, for usually he was obsessed with concealing himself and his sources, and he frequently reworked poems to obliterate such traces. Regarding the poem "With a Changing Key," for example, which was treated in chapter 5, there is no direct statement or other evidence that the "house of language," the poem's central metaphor, came from Heidegger, though it almost certainly did, for it was a recurrent topic in several of the thinker's works that Celan had recently read. But the presence of this and other Heideggerian concepts and allusions to his writings ultimately cannot be proven, and they remain, at least in part, a matter of conjecture. What follows is a sample of some probable or possible borrowings from Heidegger's thinking that seem convincing.

The poem "Whichever Stone You Lift" can easily be read as a thematization

of Heidegger's fundamental concept of "aletheia," whereby the "revealing" inherent in unconcealedness brings with it further "concealing":

Whichever Stone You Lift
Whichever stone you lift—
you lay bare
those who need the protection
of the stones:
naked,
now they renew their entwinement.

Whichever tree you fell—
you frame
the bedstead where
souls are stayed once again,
as if this aeon too
did not
tremble.[11]
[Welchen der Steine Du Hebst
Welchen der Steine du hebst—
du entblößt,
die des Schützes der Steine bedürfen:
nackt,
erneuern sie nun die Verflechtung.

Welchen der Bäume du fällst—
du zimmerst
die Bettstatt, darauf
die Seelen sich abermals stauen,
als schütterte nicht
auch dieser
Äon.] (*GW* 1:129)

The first stanza, usually read as someone lifting a headstone, describes how "laying bare" the dead, which could be construed as giving voice to them and their suffering, brings with it further concealment as their voices once again become entwined in their silence. If felling trees in the second stanza refers to the act of poetic articulation, as it seems to do elsewhere in Celan,[12] then this act simultaneously gives voice to the dead and covers their voices.

Heidegger's frequently used literary image of the "clearing" (Lichtung) connected with the unconcealedness of Being derives its name from the German word for light entering a forest clearing. And his claim that the poet lives "in a luminescent proximity to language" (in einer hellen Nähe zur Sprache, *G* 16:536) could have been written about Celan, who had a near obsession with light. Besides the role light played in his personal life,[13] images of light pervade his poetry. These "light" or "luminescent" words—for example, *Licht, Schimmer, Glanz,* and numerous other forms—usually occur in connection with Celan's rough equivalent to Heidegger's "aletheia." In his poetry they are linked to the realization or near-realization of authentic speech as the poet hears and captures the speaking-to-us of language enshrouded in silence. Using Heideggerian terms, one might almost say that the unconcealing associated with the philosopher's "Lichtung" approximates the light associated with coming-to-language of "Dichtung" in Celan's poetic world. In fact, one poem even picks up this basic image of the break or clearing in the forest and the light implicit in it as it describes words coming to language. It begins with a reference to "something unwieldly / ponderous" ("Schwerfälliges") coming down "word paths, word clearings" ("Wortwege, -schneisen, *GW* 1:275). In German these "forest clearings" ("Waldschneisen"), a formation that refers to cuts in the forest made by human hands, could be seen as a variation on Heidegger's forest clearing, since each implies a lighted area in the midst of surrounding forest darkness.

Despite such similarities, one must be careful not to read too much Heidegger into Celan. Many of the poet's interpreters, for example, see in his poetry a quest for primordial or originary language, an "Ursprache,"[14] which suggests another connection to Heidegger. Certainly this appears to be a similarity. But Celan's primary statements about primordial language already occur in his 1948 essay on Edgar Jené and predate his reading of Heidegger. Similarities can, in fact, be adduced from his poetry, but almost certainly he did not borrow the concept from Heidegger, since it was with him almost from the beginning. Instead it appears to be one of the many fundamental affinities in thought they shared rather than direct borrowing or influence.

Language That "Sounds like" Heidegger

Critics and interpreters repeatedly call attention to language in Celan that to them imitates or "sounds like" Heidegger, though few of them pursue the claim in depth. George Steiner, a perceptive Celan reader who also knows Heidegger well, is probably right when he asserts that "Heidegger's work and idiom are at

the core of Celan's poetry and prose . . . Many of Celan's word hybrids and practices of syntactic elision and displacement have their immediate counterpart in Heidegger's language genius, in his radicalization of German. There are many independent sources in Rilke, Master Eckhardt and the German Pietist tradition of rhetorical anti-rhetoric; but Heidegger's impact in Celan's speech and concepts of saying was fundamental."[15] But it is another matter to prove this "impact," that is, to establish what language came from Heidegger, given that surprising similarities in style and thought might have arisen from similar mental patterns or thought processes instead of direct influence. The diction, the style, the punctuation, and the content of various passages in the "Meridian" speech, for example, sound as if they might have come straight out of Heidegger, as the following example illustrates: "A poem—under what conditions!—becomes the poem of someone who is still perceiving, facing phenomena, questioning and addressing these phenomena"[16] (Das Gedicht wird—unter welchen Bedingungen!—zum Gedicht eines-immer noch-Wahrnehmenden, dem Erscheinenden Zugewandten, dieses Erscheinende Befragenden und Ansprechenden, *GW* 3:198). But was Celan consciously imitating his mentor? The obvious similarities have led to speculative statements about Heidegger's presence in Celan's language that often cannot be substantiated. Pöggeler, for example, hears "reminiscences" of Heidegger's diction from *Being and Time* in a 1943 poem entitled "A Warrior" ("Ein Krieger"),[17] although Celan wrote it years before he began reading the thinker.[18] In the poem "I Heard It Said" ("Ich hörte sagen," *GW* 1:85), Vivian Liska also hears references to Heidegger's "idle talk" (Gerede), his "retelling and "gossip" (Weiter und Nachreden),[19] but she gives no specific sources.

Better-grounded argument comes from Martin Jörg Schäfer, who elaborates on what he sees as conscious wordplays on Heidegger's name in two Celan poems. Though not the only critic to have noticed it, he was the first to examine it in detail where it occurs as the opening line of the poem "Largo" (same title in German). Virtually untranslatable because of the play on Heidegger's name, the lone translation to date renders it, "You of the same mind, moor-wandering near one"[20] (Gleichsinnige du, heidegängerische Nähe, *GW* 2:356). In German the pronunciation of the first two syllables of the term *moor-wandering* (heidegängerisch) is identical to that of Heidegger's name, and the third syllable begins with the same letter and as a whole produces a similar sound. While Schäfer finds nothing else in the poem that points directly to the thinker, he argues that in the surrounding poems Celan is responding to Heideggerian concepts about art and poetry, specifically the concept of poetry as naming, and that the linkage is un-

mistakable. In a closely reasoned argument he also sees the first word of the poem with the untranslatable title "Heddergemüt"(*GW* 2:225) as a conscious deformation of the thinker's name. In repeating his argument about the surrounding poems as indirectly engaging Heidegger's thought, he supports the idea that the thinker's influence at the time these poems were written—1967 and 1968—was still present in the poetry.[21]

Pöggeler thinks that Celan borrowed a formulation in the poem "After Renouncing Light" ("Nach dem Lichtverzicht," *GW* 3:142) from one of Heidegger's Hölderlin essays.[22] When he read the essay in question, the poet did not mark the passage that Pöggeler sees as the source, but the similarity in the combination of two key words used to describe poetry and their usage is conspicuous enough to suggest a connection. Heidegger writes, "But the poet calls into the singing word all the *brightness* of the sights of the heavens and every *sound* of its courses and breezes"[23] (Der Dichter jedoch ruft alle *Helle* der Anblicke des Himmels und jeden *Hall* seiner Bahnen und Lüfte in das singende Wort, *G* 7:204; italics mine). Using the adjectival form of these nouns, Celan's poem speaks of "The day *brightened* and / *sounding* from the errand" (der vom Botengang *helle, / hallende* Tag, *GW* 3:142).

English renderings give only a limited sense of how much some of Celan's diction and word formations sound as if they derived from or imitated Heidegger, but a few random samples, some from poems that have not been translated, will represent a larger number that cannot be examined here.

Celan's phrase "Ungewesen und Da" (roughly "nothavingbeen and there," *GW* 1:169) employs one of Heidegger's characteristic negating prefixes before the present participle of the infinitive *Sein* and the word *Da*, effectively negating a declined form of the signature Heideggerian term *Dasein*. The compound noun *Vonsammengeschiedenes*, meaning roughly "the divided wholeness" or "separated togetherness" (*GW* 1:265), also uses the same kind of jarring oxymoron drawn from two abstractions found throughout Heidegger. In the poem "What happened?" ("Was geschah?" *GW* 1:269) Hamburger renders "heimatlich," a term found in the late Heidegger, as "homelandly,"[24] though Heidegger uses it in the sense of "homely," meaning "homey." But the next stanza of the poem contains a phrase that sounds even more Heideggerian: "Gen Unverklungen" (*GW* 1:269). *Gen* is an archaic form of *gegen*, meaning "toward." The noun *Unverklungen*, derived from the verb *verklingen*, which means "to die or fade away," negates an acoustic effect that functions as a place-name or destination. Instead, it produces a translation that reads roughly: "toward that which does not fade away," a move reminiscent of Heidegger in its complexity and originality.

A final example might be seen in the poem "Wan-Voiced" ("Fahlstimmig," *GW* 2:307).[25] Pöggeler thinks a phrase cited below derives from an original usage of two words in Heidegger, though he does not identify them, and he claims Celan means something different with them.[26] Celan's poem reads, "Not a word, not a thing / and of both the single name" (kein Wort, kein Ding, / und beider einziger Name, *GW* 2:307).

Probable Language Borrowings and Allusions

In the poems published during his lifetime Celan uses the word *Gerede* only once. The context in which it occurs strongly suggests that he borrowed it from Heidegger's special usage of this term (usually translated as "idle talk") that he had read in section 34 of *Being and Time* more than a decade earlier. Consonant with the explanation there, the poem "Etched Away" ("Weggebeizt," *GW* 2:31) attacks the superficial language of contemporary German poets and their "gaudy idle talk of pseudo- / experience—" (das bunte Gerede des An- / Erlebten—). For a poet as profoundly sensitive to language as Celan was, it would be difficult to imagine that he used the term on this one occasion without Heidegger's special usage in mind.

This association of Heidegger's peculiar vocabulary with two other terms in his poetry that create unmistakable echoes of the thinker's language also seems inescapable. They are the word *Dasein,* which occurs three times, and the trademark Heideggerian term *Being* (Sein), which appears once. Since neither word is particularly poetic, and since Heidegger had appropriated these terms from the technical vocabulary of philosophy and put his own unique stamp on each of them, the probability that Celan was not consciously alluding to the thinker seems remote. But consistent with a strategy of revealing and concealing found in so many poems, as well as his tactic of distorting or deforming citations, he sets up overtones of Heidegger and simultaneously seems to modify the thinker's usage to fit his own view.

The three usages of *Dasein* read as follows:

1. "Dasein, an unevenness" (der Hubbel Dasein, *GW* 2:178)
2. "Dasein, a depression" (die Delle Dasein, *GW* 2:406)
3. "Dasein, a phase / stripped bare"[27] (die kahlgeplünderte / Phase Dasein, *GW* 3:77)

The first usage describes Dasein with a geomorphological term (Hubbel) that means an unevenness in the landscape, such as a small hill or dale. The second,

used in combination with a noun (Delle), is also a geomorphological term that refers to a depression in the landscape and shares a common etymology with the English *dale*. The third combines a time designation ("phase") with what could be an image of a landscape stripped of trees or plundered of mineral resources. In contrast to Heidegger's use of *Dasein* as the "being there" of humans, however, there is no human presence in these bleak, uneven landscapes. Are these late poems reflections of Celan's increasingly harsh view of human existence? Is he alluding to Heidegger in order to take issue with the thinker's fundamental term for the human condition?

This seems to be the case with his lone use of the word *Being* in another late poem that closes with the statement: "To me you sink in the midst / of Being" (Sackst du mir mitten / ins Sein, *GW* 2:368). The poem's larger context suggests that in contrast to what Heidegger had to say about humankind's relationship to Being, what the poet describes here differs sharply from the thinker's essentially positive representation of those few writers and thinkers who "sank into Being" and articulated it through word and thought. The paradox of such borrowings and allusions—a paradox that marked his entire relationship to Heidegger—is that even as his life and poetry grew bleaker and his attitude toward Heidegger became more conflicted, Celan expressed views that either disagreed with or distanced him from some of the thinker's most fundamental ideas at the same time that he acknowledged a debt to him by continuing to draw on his language.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Unresolved Contradictions

The Last Years, 1968–1970

Christoph Schwerin claims that when he visited Celan in Paris in the spring of 1968, the poet told him that the meeting with Heidegger in Freiburg the previous summer had been a disappointment. Celan had waited in vain for words of remorse and a confession of complicity that were not forthcoming, a failure that led to a "final break" in Heidegger's and Celan's relationship at this time. In addition, Schwerin says, Celan believed that Heidegger did not grasp this. Otherwise the thinker would not have wanted to meet him again when he came to Freiburg for a reading the following month, May 1968.[1] If Schwerin's account is accurate, it further underscores the painful contradictions in the poet's troubled relationship with Heidegger, for at that very moment Celan was reading Heidegger's latest work, and soon after he would reread another. Nor did Schwerin ever learn that the time his friend spent with Heidegger the next month was apparently free of tension and that Baumann, who accompanied them, described it with the surprising term "harmonious."[2]

Sometime after Heidegger had sent Celan a copy of *Track Markings (Wegmarken)* on January 30, 1968, the poet immersed himself in this, the thinker's most recent work. Judging by the number of underlinings and marginal markings or notations, he focused most of his attention on Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism," which he had first read in 1953 and which was reprinted in this edition. But markings in the essays "On the Question of Being" and "From the Last Marburg Lecture" in this collection prove that he also read these. Notwithstanding claims about a rupture in their relationship, the thinker's writings obviously had not lost their attraction for the poet, though the tension between admiration and abhorrence continued unabated. It surfaced, for example, in one passage he marked in the margin in which Heidegger claims that language is not the "utterance of an organism" or the "expression of a living being." Celan had rejected

this assertion in his "Meridian" speech, which means his marking at this point probably signaled disagreement. But in underlining the subsequent sentence, he seemed to agree with Heidegger's claim, "Language is clearing-concealing arrival of Being itself" (Sprache ist lichtend-verbergende Ankunft des Seins selbst, *G* 9:326). As with his first reading, many passages he marked this second time through focused on two main topics: the role of the poet and the function of language. He appears, for example, to have concurred with Heidegger's statement about those who "cultivate the letter," which he saw as his role, for he marked a sentence in which the thinker asserts that in the present world crisis, we need "less philosophy, but more carefulness of thinking; less literature, but more cultivation of the letter" (weniger Philosophie, aber mehr Achtsamkeit des Denkens; weniger Literatur, aber mehr: Pflege des Buchstabens, *G* 9:364). He also approved of Heidegger's rejection of Sartre's existentialist notion that each individual human exists alone—that is, without connection to anything—for he underlined and marked in the margin Heidegger's assertion that humans exist in relationship to Being (*G* 9:334). Other passages also seem to concur with Heidegger's call for a form a humanism that, in contrast to Sartre, thinks of humans in relation to Being (*G* 9:342–343). In short, his attraction to ideas about language and poetry that first drew him to Heidegger's thought again motivated his reading at this time.

The affinities he discovered in his first reading of 1954 also emerged in his 1968 or 1969 rereading of *What Is Called Thinking*. Passages that he marked at this time covered other familiar topics. They ranged from Heidegger's skepticism toward modern natural science and its destructive impact on imagination and every person's humanity (*G* 8:44–46) to his familiar play on the word *hand* as a feature that distinguishes humans from animals and allows them to carry on the "craft" (handwork) of thinking and speaking (*G* 8:18–19, 25–26). Again Celan made note of the assertion that we do not play with language but that language plays with us (*G* 8:122). And in apparent agreement he underlined and made marginal markings next to Heidegger's rejection of the instrumental use of language (*G* 8:157). As one of many examples of his ongoing, albeit ambivalent, attraction, he marked the passage in which Heidegger declared his intention of undermining the foundations of contemporary linguistics and philosophy of language and of exposing them as mere sham (*G* 8:202).

The Second Encounter—1968

In late June 1968—eleven months after his first encounter with Heidegger—Celan, who was on a reading tour in West Germany, again met the philosopher

in Freiburg, where they spent parts of several days together. Celan stayed with Gerhard Neumann, their driver during his visit the previous year. Before he gave a public reading of his translations of Mandelstam's poetry on June 26, Celan read them in private to Heidegger and a few other guests who gathered at Baumann's home.[3] On another day Heidegger and Baumann made good on their promise to show Celan a mountain moor, which they had attempted to visit the previous summer before being rained out. Like so much else in his life, Celan endowed the moor they visited in the vicinity of Tiefenhäusern in the Black Forest with extraordinary significance. Based on what Celan told him, Pöggeler claims that in a moor he saw the luminescence that arises from death and decay, a light that calls into memory what is dead yet still present.[4] He compared this emanation to the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust yet whose presence was still noticeable for him in various manifestations of light from the moor.[5] One might easily see a connection between the luminescence of unseen, light-producing decomposition, one of many images of light found throughout Celan's poetry, and the light phenomenon reflected both linguistically and conceptually in Heidegger's term "forest clearing" (Lichtung). Though not identical, each might be read in Heideggerian terms as a manifestation of the unconcealedness of Being. The difference, of course, was that for Heidegger this unconcealedness involved Being, whereas for Celan it related to specific memory, insight, and understanding of those who perished in the Nazi genocide.

In making this association with the moor and the Holocaust dead, which he concealed from Heidegger and Baumann, it is remarkable that Celan did not become upset or raise the issue of Heidegger's silence on Nazi genocide. In fact, Baumann notes that the encounter proceeded cordially and that the two had long conversations about geology, botany, and archaeology.[6] He recalls that Celan, who possessed unusual knowledge of botany, ornithology, geology, and crystallography, carried a notebook with him and entered minute observations in it on what he observed as they walked and conversed.[7] Heidegger, too, says Baumann, was very knowledgeable in these areas,[8] and the result was a mutually stimulating conversation. Celan was also very interested in words—the names of tools, activities, structures, etymologies, and dialects—and he liked to hear the colorful origins of half-forgotten terms and place-names from Heidegger. Occasionally, Baumann reports, Heidegger also "took the poet aside in order to have a conversation on more recent philosophical currents in France, on Camus, Althusser, Merleau-Ponty."[9] This comes as no surprise, since Heidegger knew of Celan's strong interest in philosophy, but Baumann says nothing about Celan's response. But judging from the variety of topics of conversation Baumann remembers, there is not the

slightest hint of anything but a warm, intellectually invigorating encounter during this 1968 visit. Like the encounter a year earlier in Todtnauberg, it seems that Heidegger's well-attested personal magnetism, not to mention the common interests the two men shared and discussed intelligently, had a calming effect on an otherwise troubled Celan as long as they were together.

After his return to Paris Celan apparently did not alter his version of this encounter as radically as he had done after the first visit to Freiburg. Pöggeler claims that in 1969 Celan told him that his conversations with Heidegger during the previous visit had centered primarily on the student uprisings of May 1968 in Paris. It is not clear if Celan was remembering selectively or if he simply did not care to share with Pöggeler other recollections of the visit or what they had discussed. But his report on Heidegger's conversation with him about these events echoes the positive influence a conversation with the thinker had on him. By the time of this visit Celan was profoundly ambivalent about the student revolt that had engulfed Paris the previous month. Initially swept up with enthusiasm, he participated in the strike at his university, marched in street demonstrations, and sang the "International." Yet despite his involvement in illegal political activities during his own youth and his ongoing anarchistic tendencies,[10] for a variety of reasons he soon became disillusioned with the events and turned against the student revolutionaries.[11] By Pöggeler's account Celan claimed that conversations with the thinker helped him see this revolution in the proper perspective. Heidegger, whose stated intention in *What Is Called Thinking* about revolutionizing language and thought (*G* 8:202) had prompted Celan to mark this passage both times he read it, is said to have spoken approvingly of the student unrest. The thinker's observation that it broke down ossified social and intellectual traditions and institutions in France apparently brought Celan back to his original position of acceptance.[12] This reversal of views is yet another example of the powerful and salutary effect Heidegger's person seems to have had on his troubled, less-stable conversation partner.

Though some skepticism and suspicion toward Heidegger must have resurfaced soon after the 1968 visit, Pöggeler also reports how, even in 1969, he heard Celan vehemently defend Heidegger against Theodor Adorno's 1964 polemic entitled *Jargon of Authenticity (Jargon der Eigentlichkeit)*.[13] In it Adorno, who among other things accused Heidegger of being an anti-Semite, claimed that there was a causal relationship between the thinker's language and thought and his susceptibility and capitulation to Nazi ideology. In Adorno's view Heidegger's thinking was fascist to the core. He further maintained that these fascist tendencies were evident in the writings of both Heidegger and Martin Buber be-

cause both used language that had been permanently tainted by the Nazis.[14] According to Pöggeler, Celan rejected Adorno's book, for it ignored basic ideas and language in Heidegger that had spoken to him. And one example cited by Adorno hurt him deeply—the term *encounter* (Begegnung), a favorite of his and of Heidegger's, but one that also enjoyed favor in the vocabulary of National Socialism. Adorno insisted that such words had been corrupted beyond redemption. Celan did not agree, though he admired Adorno and even hoped he would write an essay about his poetry. But he also knew of Adorno's own brief involvement with Nazi cultural matters and mentioned to Pöggeler a laudatory review Adorno had written of musical settings of poems by Baldur von Schirach, the party leader of the Hitler Youth, that were addressed to the führer. In them Adorno had found the same "romantic realism" that Goebbels demanded of good German art.[15] This private defense of one philosopher against charges by another, both of whom he admired, and both of whom were tainted by past involvement with Nazism, further demonstrates the growing complexity of contradictory impulses underlying his statements about and behavior toward Heidegger during these final two and one-half years of his life.

Prelude to the Final Encounter

After their June 1968 meeting in Freiburg, Celan struggled more desperately than ever with depression that occasionally touched off unpleasant episodes and led to several lengthy hospitalizations and outpatient treatments.[16] It was becoming clear that he was incurably ill. Though he managed to continue teaching, he almost stopped reading, and the separation from his wife left him with no close support system. But he continued to write poetry, and he made a few new friends, received visitors, responded positively to Klaus Demus's initiative to renew their friendship, and traveled extensively—to London, to cities in West Germany for poetry readings, to Switzerland, to the south of France, and to Israel.

Pöggeler claims that in his final conversation with Celan in 1969, in which they discussed Heidegger's views on the student uprisings in Paris the previous year, the poet also confirmed once again how closely akin he felt to Heidegger. When Pöggeler pointed to Heidegger's claim in his essay "The Poem" that Hölderlin sees the nearness of the gods precisely in their distance to humans, Celan answered immediately that he, too, had made a similar statement in his poem "With Wine and Lostness" ("Bei Wein und Verlorenheit").[17] It reads, "I rode God into the distance—the nearness"[18] (Ich ritt Gott in die Ferne—die Nähe, *GW* 1:213). Celan's acknowledgment of such an affinity between Heideg-

ger's and his own poetic thinking during this period of rapid mental deterioration testifies to just how deeply he was still enthralled by the thinker. Equally surprising is a statement he made a few weeks before his death in April 1970 to Clemens Podewils, to whom he also confessed feeling close to Heidegger's thinking. Apparently the subject of the thinker's abstruse and convoluted language came up. According to Podewils's notes, Celan immediately came to Heidegger's defense, saying, "In contrast to those who take offense at his mode of expression, I see in Heidegger someone who has recaptured for language its 'limpidity'" (Im Unterschied zu solchen, die sich an seiner Ausdrucksweise stoßen, sehe ich in Heidegger denjenigen, der der Sprache wieder ihre "limpidité" zurückgewonnen hat).[19] Celan probably used the French *limpidité,* which means to make something clear or easily intelligible, because there was no equivalent in standard lexical German. But for most readers this startling claim is the last word that would come to mind about Heidegger's language usage (Löwith had called it "banality on stilts").[20] It seems that indirectly Celan was expressing his admiration for the thinker's revolutionary attempt to create what for him was new clarity of thought and ideas by disassembling, reassembling, etymologizing, and reinventing traditional German or otherwise standing it on its head. In Heidegger he recognized a kindred spirit in terms of their common attempt to create language that would say what hitherto had been unable to be expressed.

By now, however, the tension between what one critic calls the "love and loathing"[21] that had marked his relationship to Heidegger since the beginning was becoming almost unbearable. This is illustrated in what appears to have been conceived as the draft of a letter addressed to Heidegger that Celan wrote sometime during the last five months of his life. Though he never sent it, this simultaneous condemnation and recognition of the thinker contained the same "utmost ambiguity" that Felstiner insists was the only way Celan could speak the truth.[22] Preceded by the single word "Heidegger," the fragment reads, ". . . that you (by your stance) have decisively weakened that which is poetic and, I venture to surmise, that which is thinking, in the serious will to responsibility of both" (. . . dass Sie [durch Ihre Haltung] das Dichterische und, so wage ich zu vermuten, das Denkerische, in beider ernstem Verantwortungswillen, entscheidend schwächen).[23] By imitating typical Heideggerian syntax and vocabulary in this somewhat obscure accusation, Celan tacitly acknowledged how important the thinker had been for him, as well as for twentieth-century thinking generally. Though he failed to state explicitly how Heidegger's powerful influence had compromised both poetry and thought, the clearly implied cause was his involvement with the Nazi Party and his failure to publicly write about it after the

two men's first meeting in 1967 as Celan had hoped. His reference to the "will to responsibility" of poetry and thinking, an unusual formulation, has multilayered meanings. On one level Celan is playing on Nietzsche's "will to power," a topic Heidegger knew well after writing extensively on it. Celan modified the concept slightly to suggest that power or influence of the kind exerted by Heidegger, or by great poets, brings with it responsibility. On another level there is an implicit call for accountability from Heidegger. The German *Verantwortung*, generally rendered as "responsibility," literally means "answerability." In not showing the will to be responsible or answerable, Heidegger as a public figure had failed to set the tone for thousands of other postwar artists and intellectuals who never publicly accounted for their thinking or behavior during the Nazi era.

The poet's claim that his vis-à-vis had decisively weakened both "that which is poetic" and "that which is thinking" expresses a conviction that Heidegger's stance had diminished two of the most important human activities—poetry and philosophy. But this statement also reflects implicit admiration of a thinker who probably had done as much as anyone in the twentieth century to further the cause of both. Without underlying admiration there would not have been the disappointment that led to this accusation.

The Final Encounter—March 1970

Less than a month before Celan's suicide in April 1970, he met Heidegger for the last time. On March 19 he traveled to Germany and read his latest poems at a meeting of the Hölderlin Society in Stuttgart. What by now was almost a pathological need for recognition, for praise, and for unqualified attentiveness from his listeners caused Celan to interpret the reaction to his reading there on March 21 as a personal affront.[24] Feeling misunderstood and unappreciated by the assembled academicians, writers, and literary critics, and deeply troubled by a talk on Hölderlin in which the writer Martin Walser dealt with that poet's mental illness in terms that contradicted his own views, he continued on for a four-day visit in Freiburg, where he met with the eighty-year-old Heidegger at least twice.

An incident on his second day there gives an indication of his fragile frame of mind. On March 24 Baumann, Celan's host, invited Heidegger and Birgit von Schowingen to spend an evening in his home with his visitor, an invitation Heidegger welcomed. At some point the conversation, which otherwise has not been recorded, turned to a recently published article by Gerhard Neumann, Professor Baumann's assistant who had been the driver for Celan and Heidegger during their first encounter in 1967 and had provided lodging and assisted him again

during the poet's 1968 visit. Celan, according to Baumann, liked Neumann very much,[25] but the title of the article—"The Absolute Metaphor—An Attempt at Delineation Based on Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Celan"[26]—troubled him, and he insisted on seeing a copy. Baumann gave him one before accompanying Schowingen to the train station and Heidegger to his home. When he returned, he found Celan, who had since read the article, in a rage. He railed against Neumann's attempt to compare and contrast his use of the "absolute" metaphor with Mallarmé's poetry, in part because he considered Mallarmé to be overrated, in part because he objected to all comparisons, but primarily because he believed that Neumann had completely misunderstood him—Celan considered his poetry unique and not given to comparison. As a result he insisted that he would not tolerate the presence of Neumann and his wife at a private reading of his poems two nights later.[27]

On the following day, March 25, Baumann again took him to see various sites in the surrounding region, including the Alsatian town of Colmar, where they visited Matthias Grünewald's world-famous Isenheim altar in a former Dominican monastery that had been converted into a museum. Celan, he claims, was transfixed by the "Crucifixion" scene, with its remarkable portrayal of a horribly suffering Christ. As they were leaving, he broke the silence with words that for Baumann made the identification with this figure manifest. He said only: "It is enough."[28]

On March 26 he gave a public poetry reading in Freiburg. Afterward Baumann again invited Heidegger to join them in his home for a private reading with a small circle of friends that included Gerhard Neumann and his wife. Apparently Celan had once again reversed his position and withdrawn his opposition to having the Neumanns present. Conflicting versions of what happened vis-à-vis Heidegger underscore how unstable Celan was at this point.

According to Baumann, Heidegger was a highly attentive, creative listener who was able to understand poems upon first hearing.[29] Pöggeler adds that he knew a number of Celan's poems *par coeur* and could come away from a poetry reading having memorized various lines he had just heard.[30] Immediately following this reading, Celan saw this unusual ability firsthand, for Baumann recounts that Heidegger now spoke passages verbatim from the unpublished poems Celan had just read.[31] The thinker was exactly the listener the poet had hoped for but not found in Stuttgart, and apparently it pleased him. In a letter to Franz Wurm the next day he wrote of this reading and specifically named Heidegger as one of the attentive listeners: "At Prof. Baumann's yesterday. Small group reading. Heidegger was there . . . Mrs. Baumann and a young student re-

ally listened, also the other [professor's] assistant (and his wife), also Prof. Baumann, also Heidegger" (Gestern bei Prof. Baumann, Lesung im kleinen Kreise. Heidegger war da . . . Frau Baumann und eine junge Studentin haben wirklich zugehört, auch der andere Assistent [und dessen Frau], auch Prof. Baumann, auch Heidegger).[32] For Celan the highest compliment his hearers could pay him was this kind of heightened attentiveness. Conversely he took lack of attention as a personal insult. Eight days later, and just over two weeks before he took his life, he suddenly gave an entirely different version of this reading before the group at Baumann's. In a letter to Ilana Shmueli of April 6 he now named Heidegger as one of the inattentive listeners: "My poems—in Stuttgart there was palpable resistance among the listeners, in Freiburg, where I gave two readings, they produced an extreme in hearing and understanding, [but] not among all who were present, not with Martin Heidegger, who was also listening" (Meine Gedichte—in Stuttgart gab es spürbaren Widerstand bei den Zuhörern, in Freiburg, wo ich zweimal las, bewirkten sie, nicht bei allen Anwesenden, auch nicht beim ebenfalls zuhörenden Martin Heidegger, ein äußerstes an Hören und Verstehen).[33] Like his about-face when relating his 1967 encounter with Heidegger in Todtnauberg to friends back in Paris, this contradictory version, which he also conveyed to Baumann sometime after the reading,[34] was one more sign of how radically his illness was affecting him.

After having spent the evening of March 24 with Celan, Baumann, and Schowingen, Heidegger came to the group reading on March 26 with two gifts for Celan. The first, a copy of his treatise *On the Matter of Thinking (Zur Sache des Denkens)*, contained a handwritten dedication:

> For
> Paul Celan
> in gratitude
> for the reading
> Freiburg in Breisgau, March 26, 1970
> Martin Heidegger.
> [Für Paul Celan
> zum Dank für die Lesung
> Freiburg i. Br. 26. März 1970
> Martin Heidegger.]

The second gift was a recent bilingual edition in German and French of his work *Art and Space (Die Kunst und der Raum—L'art et l'espace)*. In it he inscribed these words:

For
Paul Celan
upon meeting again
Freiburg in Breisgau, March 26, 1970
[Für Paul Celan
zum Wiedersehen
Freiburg i. Br. 26. März 1970]

Except for Celan's description in his letter to Wurm the next day, no other record exists of what else was said or done on this evening. The poet's behavior then and two days earlier, however, must have been erratic enough to raise warning signs, for when Baumann accompanied his eighty-year-old guest to his home that night after the reading, he remembers that Heidegger paused at his garden gate and confided in him that "Celan is ill—incurably" (Celan ist krank—heillos).[35] Despite having witnessed and heard of the poet's increasingly inexplicable actions in recent months, Baumann refused to accept this assessment. Somewhat over three weeks later, however, Celan's personal Furies that had pursued him for more than a decade drove him to take his own life on the night of April 19–20. For him the unresolved relationship with Heidegger had ended, though the ambivalence that had marked it for more than a decade remained.

Heidegger Remembers Celan

If Heidegger ever had ambivalent feelings toward Celan, there is no record of it. Except for a brief period in 1964 reported by Pöggeler, when he expressed frustration at understanding Celan's "allegorical" poetry,[36] he displayed unqualified admiration and appreciation for his vis-à-vis's writings and deep solicitude for him as a person. His ongoing interest in the poetry from Celan's death in 1970 until his own in 1976 testifies that the poet still fascinated him.

He continued, for example, to engage Celan's poetry. On July 4, 1970, his friend Fritz Werner gave him a copy of the recently published *Light-Compulsion (Lichtzwang)*. Besides reading it, in this edition he entered black ink corrections in the poem "Todtnauberg." Based on the bibliophile edition Celan had sent him in 1968, which he considered to be the authentic text, he corrected the words "stone die" (Steinwürfel), a misprint in this newer edition, to the "star die" (Sternwürfel) of the original. And he inserted the original "un- / delayed" (un- / gesäumt) before the phrase "coming / word / in the heart," though he could not have known that Celan had intentionally deleted it from this printing. After 1968

Heidegger also enjoyed showing friends his cherished and expensive bibliophile edition of "Todtnauberg." Pöggeler reports that during his last visit with Heidegger in 1972, they discussed Celan vis-à-vis Hölderlin, at which time the thinker enthusiastically brought out his bibliophile edition of "Todtnauberg."[37] And on January 21, 1973, he purchased a copy of the volume of Celan poems called *Thread Suns (Fadensonnen)*. Apparently he also let friends know of his ongoing interest in anything written by the poet. Among his posthumous papers are typed copies of three early unpublished poems by Celan that Curd Hochwaldt sent him on December 22, 1973—"Fairy Tale Fields" ("Die Märchenfluren"), "Memory" ("Erinnerung"), and "Notturno."

Letters from Heidegger to Klaus Demus, which hint at topics the thinker might have discussed with Celan, also testify of his ongoing interest in the poet after his death. One letter, dated March 15, 1971, reports on what must have been a conversation about poetry, with specific reference to poems by Demus. It implies that near the end of his life Celan must have encouraged Demus to send his latest poems to Heidegger:

> At one of the last encounters with Paul Celan he mentioned your name. Immediately thereafter your [collection of poems] "Morning Night" from Neske publishers arrived. Meanwhile, soon after the last encounter with Paul Celan on Maundy Thursday last year, I fell ill. Hence my belated thanks to you for the poems.
>
> [Bei einer der letzten Begegnungen mit Paul Celan nannte er mir Ihren Namen. Alsbald kam vom Neske Verlag Ihre "Morgennacht." In der Zwischenzeit, kurz nach der letzten Begegnung mit Paul Celan, am vorjährigen Gründonnerstag, erkrankte ich. So kommt nun mein verspäteter Dank zu Ihnen für die Gedichte.]

In response Demus must have sent him an original manuscript copy of a poem by Celan, for in a letter of April 24, 1971, Heidegger responded warmly to Demus and his wife:

> When I opened your letter of Easter Sunday, my glance first fell on the sheet with the familiar handwriting of the "untranslatable" poem by Paul Celan that I know "by memory" or, more elegantly, par coeur. I don't know how I can thank you both for this valuable gift. After my death, it and your letter, as part of my posthumous manuscript papers, will go to the German Literary Archives in Marbach am Neckar. The enclosed small texts belong to the anniversary of Paul Celan's death, which takes place around this time.
>
> [Als ich Ihren Brief vom Ostersonntag öffnete, fiel der Blick zuerst auf das Blatt mit der mir vertrauten Handschrift des selbst "unübersetzbaren" Gedichtes von

> Paul Celan, das ich "auswendig" kenne, schöner gesagt, par coeur. Ich weiß nicht, wie ich Ihnen beiden für diese kostbare Gabe danken soll. Sie wird, samt Ihrem Brief nach meinem Tod mit meinem handschiftlichen Nachlass, gleichsam zu ihm gehörend, in das deutsche Literaturarchiv in Marbach a.N. gehen. Die beiliegenden kleinen Texte gehören jetzt dem in diesen Tagen sich jährenden Todestag des Dichters.]

Several points in this letter emphasize how important the poet still was to the eighty-one-year-old thinker and hint at unknown aspects of their relationship. Heidegger's immediate recognition of the handwriting on the enclosed manuscript of a poem by Celan suggests either that the poet had sent him a number of letters over the years or that he had sent him manuscript copies of other poems or both. It is not known which poem Demus sent him, but the word "untranslatable" that Heidegger sets in quotation marks might allude to discussions he had had with the poet, or to something Demus had written. Since the word obviously does not mean "translation" in the conventional sense (Demus included only a German poem and no translations), Heidegger may have been alluding to his own secondary usage, well known to Celan, about "transferring" or "transporting" thinking and poetry into the realm of understanding.

Besides confirming what Baumann and Pöggeler claimed about Heidegger's unusual ability to grasp and retain poetry he had heard or read, his statement to Demus that he already knew this poem by memory underscores the role Celan's poems continued to play in his thinking. His wish to include the manuscript of this poem among his own posthumous papers also must be read as a sign of his high esteem for Celan's work. Perhaps the most striking statement is what he says about the "small texts" (copies of his own poems that he enclosed for Demus to read) that he mentions in the context of the first anniversary of Celan's death. Heidegger states it was "around this time" because he knew of the uncertainty surrounding the precise date (his letter was dated April 24). His commemorative gesture is especially meaningful when viewed in the context of those whose death dates are usually remembered—close family members, loved ones, personal heroes, or admired public figures. Had Celan not continued to occupy an important place in his mind, Heidegger probably would not have been so mindful of him a year after his death. And judging by a note he included with a book he sent Demus on November 2, 1974, Celan's memory was still alive. Addressing Demus as a "poet of the grand appearance of nature as world" (den Dichter des großen Scheinens der Natur als Welt), the thinker concludes with the phrase "thinking of [remembering] the friend Paul Celan"

(andenkend an den Freund Paul Celan). This statement, made eighteen months before his own death, is his last documented reference to Celan known at this time. But the sum of these activities and reminiscences makes it clear that until the end of Heidegger's life, Celan continued to occupy a significant place in his world.

A Conclusion of Sorts

One of the difficulties in drawing conclusions about the Celan-Heidegger relationship is that it was never resolved, but it also never dissolved. Like much of Celan's poetry, there was no closure that allows for unqualified summary statements. Another barrier to valid conclusions is that much remains unknown (for example, the location of the letters they exchanged). Further, there is much that can never be known (for example, details of the exact content of their conversation during Celan's 1967 visit to Todtnauberg). Nevertheless, it is possible to draw a few preliminary conclusions, though they, too, do not answer the fundamental question of what it was that drew Heidegger and Celan to each other and sustained a seemingly improbable relationship over almost two decades. In fact, such conclusions only raise additional questions.

First, in light of seemingly irreconcilable differences in personality, political views, ethnic and national background, and personal experiences, it is remarkable that the relationship endured at all. Why, after first meeting Heidegger in 1967, did Celan come back to visit him two more times when he had every opportunity to break off contact? Conversely, why did this world-renowned thinker with connections or access to the most important minds of his age remain interested in the poet until the end of his own life, when he had so many other artists and thinkers to hold his attention? This indefinable "something" begs a more definitive answer than this study can provide.

Another conclusion is that from available external evidence, Celan seems to have profited from his acquaintance with Heidegger more than the philosopher did from Celan's poetry. It is not too much to say that Celan went to school with Heidegger and could be counted among his most serious students. But there appears to be no counter evidence that Heidegger learned from the poet or drew on his writings for his own thinking as the poet did on his. Furthermore, the thinker had received enough honors and adulation by this time in his life that he did not need Celan nearly as much as the younger man needed him. This imbalance

raises the question of why Heidegger even bothered to cultivate the relationship as he did.

One tentative conclusion is that in Celan's works Heidegger apparently recognized a kinship or affinity with his own thinking about language and poetry, much as the poet had done with his writings, a topic that merits further investigation. Another is that he recognized Celan's language genius as being on the same level as that of other great poets to whom he was attracted, such as Hölderlin, Rilke, and Trakl. Pöggeler claims that when he sent him Celan's *Speech-Grille,* Heidegger responded in a letter of August 16, 1960, with the statement he considered these poems to be "very important" (sehr wichtig). Pöggeler adds that Heidegger was almost the only one who agreed with his assertion that this volume not only represented a high point in German literature but that it could take its place alongside the language of Isaiah, Sophocles, and Hölderlin.[1]

One must also conclude that although they treated each other with deference and courtesy when together, in private Heidegger generally was gracious, interested in, and solicitous of the poet, whereas Celan, especially after 1967, was often harshly critical of the thinker. At this point there is almost no evidence that Celan went out of his way either to meet or to accommodate Heidegger as the thinker often did for him. Such a conclusion is neither a justification for Heidegger's behavior nor a condemnation of Celan's, for the poet's mental illness obviously affected his judgment and distorted his statements about the thinker. But in terms of behavior toward each other, their relationship was not balanced or equal.

In answer to the question of how well they really understood each other, a preliminary conclusion is that they probably did not, or at best only partially. Celan's grasp of many components of Heidegger's thinking is evident from his writings, but he does not seem to have understood some of his thought, the complexity of Heidegger's person, and certainly not the reasons for his brief ideological involvement with Nazism or his silence about it. It was unfathomable to Celan that the thinker, like many other German intellectuals and artists, could have been caught up in that ideology. Pöggeler's various accounts of his visits to Heidegger at which they discussed Celan suggest that for his part, the thinker made considerable effort to engage and understand Celan's poetry, his theory of poetry, and his biography but that he did not always succeed. This seems especially notable in his reading of Celan's "Meridian" speech, where his notes reveal that he attempted to make Celan's views on poetry conform to his own thinking rather than trying to understand them on their own terms or conceding that they contradicted his own.[2]

In a sense, the unlikely, troubled, contradictory relationship between these two figures serves as a paradigm for what was going on in the 1950s and 1960s as West Germany attempted to come to grips with its Nazi past and with its critics inside and outside the country. In many of his poems Celan spoke for dead victims of the Holocaust who were unable to speak for themselves. In a broader sense he also represented both those who survived it and those Germans who were determined not to forget their recent past. Along with them he was obsessed with justice and especially with keeping alive the memory of "what had happened." He, and some in Germany, wanted confession of culpability from former Nazis, punishment for their crimes, and accountability from the large numbers of Germans who had been complicit with the Third Reich. The past, they believed, must be held up as a cautionary tale, a constant pricking of public and private conscience in order to prevent a recurrence of the Nazi horrors. He, then, was both an accuser and a spokesman for the accusers.

Unlike the first group, Heidegger and many in Germany like him were not at all obsessed with justice but with silence, a topic on which the thinker had written much, though his was a different, some might say almost mystical, phenomenon. Their silence was a result of intentional amnesia, a conscious suppression of unpleasant facts. It was a coping mechanism driven by a desire to avoid the pain of confronting a past for which many did not feel responsible. In March 1933, two months after Hitler came to power, a majority of Germans had not voted for him. Furthermore, the Third Reich and the war years had inflicted great personal suffering and loss of life on them and their families. Heidegger and others in this group had initially been receptive to the promises Hitler and the Nazis made to them about removing what they felt to be the disgrace of Versailles, combating the Communist menace, and restoring national pride by creating a new social order. But they soon felt deceived and at least partially betrayed by later developments. These circumstances, followed by the effects of World War II on the entire population, produced a victim mentality among the many who at some point realized that they had no choice but to capitulate to an oppressive regime. While this group included some who denied any German guilt, most were like Heidegger, whom Richard Rorty calls a "political ignoramus."[3] They admitted privately that they had made mistakes by going along with the Nazis, but they could not or did not speak of those mistakes openly. Pöggeler claims that in private conversations Heidegger admitted that he had been completely wrong about the Nazis and that his actions could not be excused.[4] But like so many others who privately questioned the efficacy of dredging up the past, of public displays of penance, and of assuming the burden of guilt for acts in which

many of them, especially the younger generation, were not involved, he refused to speak publicly about his activities during those years. This group, then, stood as the accused.

Within this paradigm Celan played the role of the accuser and Heidegger the accused. But in contrast to the groups described above, Celan complicated matters. For whatever reasons, he, the accuser, was unable to overcome his fascination with, and admiration for, the accused, though this did little to mitigate his accusations. This paradox, which underlies his complex, tormented, yet productive relationship with one of the most important thinkers of his century, is the basic reason why his connection to Heidegger ultimately defies description. As is the case in much of his poetry, too much remains unresolved. Perhaps the opening words of a poem that speaks of "the divided music of thinking" (die entzweite Denkmusik, *GW* 3:135) comes closest to describing Celan and Heidegger. Each resonated to many of the same sounds, but in the end, it was the dissonance or different tones within the same music each heard that both connected and separated them.

Celan's Known Readings of Works by Heidegger

All the works listed here were in Celan's personal library at his death. Celan also owned seven French translations of works by Heidegger, none of which reveals markings or other evidence of having been read. An asterisk before a title designates a work that Heidegger dedicated and sent or personally gave to Celan. If the date of acquisition or chronology of reading date is unknown, a blank is left.

DATE OF ACQUISITION	TITLE	CHRONOLOGY OF READING DATE(S)
—	*Der Feldweg*	October 17, 1951
By February 1952–	*Sein und Zeit*	February–March 1952 and 1953
August 13, 1952	*Was ist Metaphysik*	August 20, 1952
July 5, 1953	*Holzwege*	July–August 1953
August 20, 1953	*Über den Humanismus*	August 20–21, 23, 1953
September 1953	*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*	September 1953
November 23, 1953	*Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*	—
—	*Vom Wesen des Grundes*	—
September 23, 1954	*Einführung in die Metaphysik*	October 7, 21, 1954
—	*Was heißt Denken*	October 21, 1954[a]
By June 6, 1956	*Zur Seinsfrage*	June 6, 1956
Late September 1956	**Gespräch mit Hebel beim "Schatzkästlein": Zum Hebeltag 1956*	—

[a] Celan reread at least parts of this work in 1958. On July 24, 1967, Heidegger gave him another copy with a personal dedication in it. Markings indicate that Celan read much of it again on August 30, 1969.

November 23, 1956	*Was ist das—die Philosophie?*	—
—	*Hebel: Der Hausfreund*	—
May 9, 1957	*Der Satz vom Grund*	May 9–10, 1957
November 23, 1956	*Vorträge und Aufsätze*[b]	August 1959
After August 24, 1958	**Identität und Differenz*	August 30, 1959
Late 1958	**Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit: Mit einem Brief über den "Humanismus"*	—
November 1959	**Unterwegs zur Sprache*	1959
August 1961	**Nietzsche* (2 vols.)	August 31, 1961
February 6, 1963	*Die Technik und die Kehre*	—
October 29, 1964	*Gelassenheit*	October 29, 1964
July 25, 1967	**Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*	—
July 25, 1967	**Erinnerung an Hans Jantzen*	—
January 30, 1968	**Wegmarken*	—
March 26, 1970	**Die Kunst und der Raum*	—
March 26, 1970	**Zur Sache des Denkens*	—

[b] Celan finished the "Nietzsche" essay in this collection on August 9, 1959, and reread it on August 6, 1964. He also finished the essays "Das Ding" and ". . . dichterisch wohnot der Mensch" (both in this volume) on August 30, 1959.

Preface

1. Steiner, "Songs of a Torn Tongue," 1093.

One • The Repulsion and Attraction of Opposites

1. Bonnefoy, "Paul Celan," 11.
2. Steiner, *Heidegger,* 23.
3. Taken from the title of Van Buren's *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King.*
4. Bachmann, *Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden,* 137.
5. Bachmann, "Die kritische Aufnahme der Existenzphilosophie Martin Heideggers."
6. Bachmann, interview by Karol Sauerland, in *Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden,* 137.
7. See ibid., where Bachmann speaks of her admiration for Heidegger at the same time that she is attacking him in her dissertation.
8. Klaus Demus, interview by the author, June 25, 1999. Demus, who met Celan in Vienna, quickly became one of his closest friends.
9. Weigel, *Ingeborg Bachmann,* 446.
10. Celan, *Gesammelte Werke* [hereafter *GW*], 3:155–161. For lengthier editions containing critical-historical texts of Celan's poems and other writings see the two competing editions, neither of which has been published completely at this writing: Celan, *Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe;* and Celan, *Werke: Tübinger Ausgabe.*
11. Sars, "Ein solcher Ausgangspunkt wären meine Gedichte," 24.
12. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience,* 33.
13. Demus, letter to the author, July 3, 1998.
14. Demus, interview by the author, June 25, 1999.

Two • Approaching Heidegger: Celan Reads *Being and Time,* 1952–1953

1. In a series of bibliographic notes he made in 1960 before writing his "Meridian" speech, Celan entered two titles by Heidegger—*Being and Time* and *On the Essence of Reason*—which indicates that he knew both works, though he gives no reading dates for either. See Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien,* 210.

2. Specific reading dates entered by Celan are March 2, 9, 1952; Feb. 24, 25, and March 9, 1953. Unless otherwise indicated, information about markings, marginalia, and other notes by Celan is drawn from copies of Heidegger's works located in his posthumous library in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, Germany. Despite a listing of sixteen works by Heidegger found in Celan's library at his death, the absence of the lecture "On the Essence of Reason" and other works he mentions elsewhere suggests that his original collection of books by Heidegger was even larger.

3. Schwerin, "Bitterer Brunnen des Herzens," 76.

4. Marginal annotations that Celan made in editions of works from philosophers whom he read and whose works are found in his posthumous library have been published in Celan, *La Bibliothèque philosophique.*

5. Though I am indebted to John Macquarrie's and Edward Robinson's translation of *Being and Time,* all translations are my own. Page numbers for German citations are based on the version of *Sein und Zeit* published as vol. 2 of Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe: Ausgabe letzter Hand* [cited in the text hereafter as *G*].

6. Steiner, "The Hollow Miracle," 37–38.

7. The first of many to treat this topic extensively was Schwarz, *Totengedächtnis und dialogische Polarität.*

8. For examples of specific diction drawn from mysticism see Schulze, *Celan und die Mystiker.* For a treatment of Jewish elements see Mayer, *Paul Celan als jüdischer Dichter;* and Mayer, "'Alle Dichter sind Juden.'" Further deciphering of Jewishness in Celan's language and thought is found in Felstiner, *Paul Celan;* and Colin, *Paul Celan.* The language of geology and geomorphology in Celan is analyzed in Lyon, "Celan's Language of Stone." For Celan's use of medical terminology see Lyon, "Die (Patho-)Physiologie des Ichs in der Lyrik Paul Celans."

9. Because his wife did not speak German, Celan carried on his correspondence with her in French. See Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:452. A German translation of this edition appeared simultaneously as Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Briefwechsel.*

10. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:141.

11. See Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe,* 2:22, 23, 26, 217, 219.

12. In a note that is published in Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien* (131), Celan claims he wrote "Deathfugue" in September 1945.

13. For examples of how Celan and his wife repeatedly used this term with each other see Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:33, 48, 50, 53, 55, 70, 78, 99, 104, 113, 124.

14. Rothenberg, "Paul Celan," 112.

15. See especially his statements in his "Meridian" speech in *GW* 3:186, 198–201.

16. Steiner, "So Much Darkness Dispelled," 135.

Three • "Connecting" with Heidegger, 1952–1954

1. Otto Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 8, 1993.

2. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:35.

3. Gellhaus, "Marginalien," 44.

4. All page references for *Wrong Paths* in this chapter are from vol. 5 of Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* (*G* 5).

5. *GW,* 3:195; Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 407.

6. The editors of the notes, working papers, and drafts of his "Meridian" speech refer to "numerous orthographic errors" they corrected in these documents. See Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien,* xiv.

7. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:83.

8. Schwerin, *Als sei nichts gewesen,* 203.

9. Shmueli, *Sag, dass Jerusalem ist,* 11.

10. See Celan, *La Bibliothèque philosophique,* 367–368.

11. Here I have used the translation of Albert Hofstadter, in Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought,* 94.

12. The line is from a letter Celan wrote to unidentified relatives in Israel on Aug. 2, 1948 (cited in Rosenthal, "Quellen zum frühen Paul Celan," 230).

13. Two important works on Celan's role as a translator are Olschner, *Der feste Buchstab;* and Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe.*

14. The German *Zuspruch* (and its verb form, *zusprechen*) came to have special meaning for Celan, who repeated it later with specific reference to its source in Heidegger (see chapter 7). This multivalent word has a wide, often contradictory, range of meanings. It can refer to one person's addressing another. In other contexts it can mean an exhortation or an admonition. Yet other usages denote the act of encouraging or comforting. It can also mean to accost someone verbally. And it can be used to describe a run of customers on a business or consumer item or a heavy demand on services, such as bookings for a concert, hotel, and so forth. Celan understood it in the context of Heidegger's idea of how the language of Being is "dictated" to the poet or thinker. He personalized it to be a description of how language "spoke to" him as poet. For this reason I have rendered it throughout as "the speaking-to-him" of language or of primordial thought, with the pronoun being interchangeable according to the recipient.

Four • Earliest Traces of Heidegger in Celan's Works, 1953–1954

1. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:29.

2. Kraus, *Die Werke von Karl Kraus,* 79.

3. Manger, "Mit wechselndem Schlüssel," gives detailed information on Celan's source for the title and an extensive interpretation. He sees Heideggerian thinking at work in the poem, but he does not make a connection between Heidegger's image of language as the house of Being and the poem.

4. Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe,* 145–146.

5. Axel Gellhaus makes this observation in his essay "Fergendienst-Einleitende Gedanken zum Übersetzen bei Paul Celan," 12.

6. Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe,* 397.

7. Ibid., 13.

8. Steiner, *After Babel,* 409.

9. Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 238.

10. Reported by Bücher et al. in Celan, *Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe,* 4.2:151.

11. France-Lanord, *Paul Celan et Martin Heidegger,* 251.

12. Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien,* 210.

Five • Celan's Notebook on *What Is Called Thinking* and *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1954

1. The complete texts of the notebook entries have been published in Celan, *La Bibliothèque philosophique*, 348–355, 401–410.
2. Firges, *Den Acheron durchquert ich*, 9.
3. *GW*, 3:198; Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose*, 410.
4. Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose*, 395.
5. Here I use Ralph Manheim's translation of this term from Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 5.
6. Ibid., 33.
7. Ibid., 149.
8. Ibid., 161.
9. Letter to Hans Bender of Nov. 18, 1954, in Neuhaus and Heimbüchel, *Briefe an Hans Bender*, 35.
10. Ibid., 34–35.
11. Ibid.
12. Gellhaus, "Das Datum des Gedichts," 183.
13. Neuhaus and Heimbüchel, *Briefe an Hans Bender*, 34.

Six • Doubts Grow and Problems Arise, 1954–1956

1. Löwith, *Heidegger*, 43.
2. Otto Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 8, 1993. Pöggeler was a student in Paris during the 1950s and was current on Parisian thinking.
3. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance*, 2:497.
4. Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 18, 1998.
5. Jean Bollack, interview by the author, Dec. 3, 2000.
6. Schwerin, "Bitterer Brunnen des Herzens," 79.
7. Statement by the critic Georg Maurer made in January 1956. Cited in Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, die Goll-Affäre*, 198. Subsequent references will abbreviate this title to read *Goll-Affäre*.
8. Celan to Alfred Andersch, July 27, 1956, in Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre*, 226. Here and in a letter of July 17, 1956, to Hermann Lenz, Celan also gives a version of his efforts to help Goll before his death. See Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Hanne und Hermann Lenz*, 54–55.
9. Celan, "Briefe an Alfred Margul-Sperber."
10. Sanders, "Erinnerung an Paul Celan," 311–312.
11. Reported in Dor, *Auf dem falschen Dampfer*, 214.
12. Hermann Lenz claims Celan told him this personally. See Lenz, "Erinnerung an Paul Celan," 316.
13. Hohoff, "Flötentöne hinterm Nichts," 242. Celan claimed that Hohoff was the only critic in West Germany who was receptive to Claire Goll's accusations; see Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre*, 231.
14. Reported by Bertrand Badiou in Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance*, 2:503.

15. Sanders, "Erinnerung an Paul Celan," 312.

16. Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe,* 223. Ewout van der Knaap makes the same claim; see Van der Knaap, "Übersetztes Gedächtnis," 262.

17. Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe,* 223, 261.

18. Schwerin, *Als sei nichts gewesen,* 202, claims the request came in 1955.

19. See Van der Knaap, "Übersetztes Gedächtnis," 262–278, for a detailed analysis.

20. Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe,* 224–234, gives extensive documentation on the larger context in which Celan's translation took place.

21. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:504.

22. Felstiner, *Paul Celan,* 102–104.

23. Grass, *Schreiben nach Auschwitz,* 30.

24. Shmueli, "Denk Dir. Paul Celan in Jerusalem," 14, claims that Celan never spoke of the "Holocaust" but only of "that which was."

25. Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 124–125.

26. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 39–40.

Seven • More Appropriations from Heidegger: *The Principle of Reason,* 1957

1. Shmueli, *Sag, dass Jerusalem ist,* 31.

2. Celan, *Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe,* which began appearing in 1990, is (at this writing) still incomplete. New volumes appear at irregular intervals. See also the report on this edition in Gellhaus, "Textgenese zwischen Poetologie und Editionstechnik."

3. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 30.

4. Cited in Fitzhugh, *Harper Book of Quotations,* 480.

5. Neuhaus and Heimbüchel, *Briefe an Hans Bender,* 35.

6. For a discussion of Celan's view of "art" see Gellhaus, "Polarisierung," 51–91.

7. See Hermann Lenz's description of Celan's ill-disguised annoyance while reading before disciples of Ernst Benz, the most prominent promoter of concrete poetry, in Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Hanne und Hermann Lenz,* 8–9. An earlier treatment of Celan and the concrete poets is found in Lyon, "Poetry and the Extremities of Language." In 1983, however, biographical information on Celan's deep-seated antipathy for this type of literature was not yet available.

8. Letter of April 25, 1962, from Celan to Nina Cassian, cited in Gutu, *Die Lyrik Paul Celans,* 252.

9. Celan to an unidentified friend, cited in Rosenthal, *Pathways to Paul Celan,* 169.

10. Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe,* 398.

11. Cited in Sulzer et al., *Der Georg-Büchner-Preis, 1951–1978,* 134.

12. Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Hanne und Hermann Lenz,* 14.

13. Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe,* 397.

14. Ibid., 398.

Eight • Drawing on and Withdrawing from Heidegger, 1958

1. Fynsk, "Poetic Relation," 22.

2. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:510.

3. Here I use Felstiner's translation in *Selected Poems and Prose,* 395.

4. Wrathall, "Social Constraints on Conversational Content," 35–41, translates *Rede* as "conversation."

5. Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz,* 29. This work is scheduled for publication in vol. 11 of the *Gesamtausgabe.* Since it had not appeared when this manuscript went to press, I have cited the edition Celan used and marked.

6. Pöggeler, *Neue Wege mit Heidegger,* trans. by John Bailiff as *The Paths of Heidegger's Life and Thought,* 10–35.

7. Bailiff, *Paths of Heidegger's Life,* viii. See also William McNeill's and Julia Davis's rendering as "event of appropriation" in their translation of Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister,"* 181.

8. All translations of Celan's Bremen speech come from Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 395–396.

9. Firges, *Den Acheron durchquert ich,* 9

10. Neske, *Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger,* 299.

11. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:515. Celan himself describes this incident to Hermann and Hanne Lenz in a letter dated March 21, 1959; see Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Hanne und Hermann Lenz,* 111.

12. More than forty years after the incident, Firges published his own version of what happened. See Firges, "Ein Satyrspiel?" 331–333.

13. Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 8, 1993. See also Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre,* 411; Wiedemann also claims that Firges knew and defended the perpetrator.

14. Pöggeler interview, June 8, 1993; Firges, "Ein Satyrspiel?" 333.

15. In his account recorded in "Ein Satyrspiel?" 333, Firges claims that although Celan was furious with him at the time, they were reconciled in 1965.

16. Facsimile published in France-Lanord, Paul Celan et Martin Heidegger, 295.

Nine • Mounting Cognitive Dissonance, Growing Independence, 1959–1960

1. Strelka, letter to the author, Sep. 26, 2001.

2. Minder's own account appears in his book *Dichter in der Gesellschaft,* 366. Citations are from this expanded version of the lecture Strelka heard, which is published on pages 210–264.

3. Ibid., 241.

4. Ibid., 243.

5. Ibid., 251.

6. Heidegger, who admired Abraham a Sancta Clara, delivered an address on him in 1964 that is reprinted in his *Gesamtausgabe: Ausgabe letzter Hand,* vol. 16, *Reden und Zeugnisse,* 598–608.

7. Passages from Blöcker's review are cited in Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:519. See also Felstiner, *Paul Celan,* 148, for more information on Celan's reaction to and subsequent correspondence with Blöcker.

8. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:520. Reports of his doing research on former Nazis in the Bibliothèque Nationale also come from Strelka, *Des Odysseus Nachfahren,* 41; and Jean Bollack, interview by the author, Dec. 3, 2000.

9. Burauer, *Zwischen Erinnerung und Verdrängung,* 83, notes that according to informa-

tion from the West German Ministry of the Interior this number of anti-Semitic incidents took place in West Germany alone between late December 1959 and February 18, 1960.

10. See Gellhaus et al., *Fremde Nähe,* 336–354, for a more detailed account of Celan's attraction to Mandelstam.

11. See Emmerich, *Paul Celan,* 100, 105, 109.

12. Published in Badiou et al., *Paul Celan,* 45.

13. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 42.

14. Pöggeler, "Erinnerungen an große Lehrer," 266.

15. Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 128–129.

16. Pöggeler, "Erinnerungen an große Lehrer," 266; Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 40.

17. Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 128.

18. Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 407; Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 40; Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 128.

19. Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 124.

20. Accounts of the Heidegger and Buber lectures can be read in Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 149–151; and Pöggeler, "Kontroverses zur Ästhetik Paul Celans," 232–233.

21. In December 1968 I sent Celan a preliminary version of an article that explored similarities in his dialogical thinking and Buber's. In a draft letter dated February 10, 1969, that he never sent, Celan diplomatically disclaimed any connection between the title of his own "Gespräch im Gebirg" and an early work by Buber entitled "Gespräch in den Bergen," to which I had called attention. But he went on to confirm that there were other parallels, among them the dialogical underpinnings of their works: "You get closer to essentials when you interpret parallel structures of thought and spiritual affinities, such as the dialogical" (aber näher kommen Sie den Dingen dort, wo Sie parallele Denkstrukturen und geistige Affinitäten interpretieren, das Dialogische etwa). Celan's draft of this unsent letter is in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach under the call no. D 90.1.880.

22. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 41.

23. Böschenstein, "Gespräche und Gänge mit Paul Celan," 7.

24. Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 18, 1999.

25. Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 8, 1993.

26. Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 125.

27. Pöggeler, *Lyrik als Sprache unserer Zeit?* 28; Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 2; Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 42.

28. Felstiner, *Paul Celan,* 149.

29. Bachmann, *Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden,* 137.

30. Washburn, introduction to *Last Poems,* xxx.

31. Celan to Neske, unpublished letter in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach, under the call no. D 90.1.914.

32. Translation is Hofstadter's, from Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought,* 226.

33. Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 18, 1999.

34. Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien,* 87. Subsequent citations from this edition are referenced parenthetically in the text as *DM* followed by the relevant page number(s).

Ten • Heidegger as Catalyst: Celan Begins to Write His Own Poetics, 1959–1960

1. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug*, 10.

2. Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien*, xi.

3. Reported by Böschenstein et al. in Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien*, 235.

4. See Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, 7:68–72.

5. See Gellhaus, "Das Datum des Gedichts."

6. See Heidegger's *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, in *Gesamtausgabe*, 24:370.

7. Translation is Hofstadter's, from Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 216.

8. Translation is Macquarrie and Robinson's, from Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 165–166.

9. Ibid., 62.

Eleven • *The Meridian:* An "Implicit Dialogue with Heidegger," 1960

1. One of the earliest works to raise the connection of *Meridian* to Heidegger is Meinecke, *Wort und Name bei Paul Celan*, 86. See also Brierley, *Der Meridian*, 420–421; and Gellhaus, "Polarisierung," 80–87.

2. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience*, 45; Fóti, "A Missed Interlocution," 99.

3. Gellhaus, "Polarisierung," 80.

4. See Benn, "Probleme der Lyrik," 16–18. In his notes for the "Meridian" speech, Celan specifically takes issue with Benn's poetic concept of the "phenotype"; see Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung, Entwürfe, Materialien*, 110.

5. For Curtius's and Hocke's views on "topoi" see Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages;* Hocke, *Die Welt als Labyrinth;* and Hocke, *Manierismus in der Literatur*. For Friedrich's views on modern poetry see Friedrich, *Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik*. On Celan and Proust see Hans Mayer, *Der Repräsentant und der Märtyer*, 180. See also Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre*, 470–487; and Fóti, "A Missed Interlocution,"99.

6. Emmanuel Levinas, "Paul Celan," 41.

7. Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre*, 481.

8. Fynsk, *Language and Relation*, 145.

9. The German word *Druckmittel* that Heidegger uses here has an untranslatable double meaning. Besides being a "print medium," it can denote a "means of applying pressure," e.g., in its use for propaganda or other persuasive purposes such as advertising.

10. Wiedemann interprets this and scores of other notes Celan wrote for the "Meridian" speech as subtle references to the accusations of plagiarism leveled against him by the widow of Yvan Goll; see Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre*, 403–486.

11. See Benn, "Probleme der Lyrik," 1073, 1092; see also Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre*, 478–479.

12. Gellhaus, "Polarisierung," 70.

13. Translation by Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose*, 402–403. Subsequent English translations from Celan's *Meridian* vary Felstiner's either slightly or significantly. Though I am deeply indebted to Felstiner for his excellent translations, I am responsible for the final renderings in my text.

14. For a treatment of these terms see Wrathall, "Social Constraints on Conversational Content."

15. Translation by Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 406.

16. Jamme, "'Unserer Daten eingedenkt,'" 285.

17. The most comprehensive attempt to deal with Celan's rejection of Mallarmé's concept of the "absolute" metaphor is found in Neumann, "Die 'absolute' Metapher."

18. Besides numerous works by Buber that Celan had obviously read, his posthumous library contains a marked copy of Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige,* which deals with the concept of God as "the wholly Other" (das ganz Andere).

19. Gellhaus, "Polarisierung," 86. The word *verhoffen* is found in Heidegger's *Vorträge und Aufsätze,* in *Gesamtausgabe,* 7:34.

Twelve • Descending into the "Loneliest Loneliness," 1960–1961

1. Goll, "Unbekanntes über Paul Celan," 15–16.

2. See Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Hanne und Hermann Lenz,* 53–73, for examples. The Lenzes actively sought support for Celan in academic and literary circles and legal advice from an attorney on how Celan should proceed.

3. Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 8, 1993.

4. See Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre,* esp. 211–289.

5. Ibid., 470–487.

6. Ibid., 839.

7. See Lyon, "Judentum, Antisemitismus, Verfolgungswahn," esp. 191–198.

8. The text is reproduced in Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre,* 280–289.

9. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 92.

10. Demus, interview by the author, July 2, 1973.

11. Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Hanne und Hermann Lenz,* 151–152.

12. Emmerich, *Paul Celan,* 122.

13. In addition to examples published in Wiedemann, *Goll-Affäre,* 488–648, see the letters Celan wrote to Reinhard Federmann in February and March 1962, published as "Paul Celan: Briefe."

14. Celan, "Briefe an Alfred Margul-Sperber," 58.

15. Chalfen, *Paul Celan,* 175.

16. Silbermann, "Paul Celan und die Bukowina," 12.

17. Buber, "Das Wort, das gesprochen wird."

18. Ibid., 444.

19. Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 124; Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 160.

20. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:526.

21. Felstiner, *Paul Celan,* 161.

22. Klaus Demus, interview by the author, July 2, 1973.

23. In the July 2, 1973, interview Demus showed me this copy with Buber's dedication to Celan on the title page.

24. Celan entered this reading date on page 301 of the text he read. This Nietzsche work was published as books 1 and 2 in volume 6 of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe.*

25. Sachs, *Paul Celan, Nelly Sachs,* 14.

26. Cited in Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 156–157; also found in Pöggeler, "Kontroverses zur Ästhetik Paul Celans," 238.

27. Heidegger, *Nietzsche,* in *Gesamtausgabe,* 6.1:259.

28. In this and the two subsequent quotations I use Stambaugh et al.'s translation; see Heidegger, *Nietzsche,* 192.

29. This "Handbibliothek" is located in Heidegger's house in Freiburg. According to Hermann Heidegger, the philosopher's son, who allowed me to see this volume, a considerable portion of Heidegger's library did not go to the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach but was either sold or given to relatives. Hermann Heidegger, interview by the author, June 22, 1998. His subsequent inquiries of relatives who still have part of the original library failed to turn up any works by Celan.

30. No copies have been found in Celan's posthumous library, the bulk of which is located in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach or in the private possession of his son, Eric Celan, in Paris.

31. Hermann Heidegger, interview by author, June 22, 1998.

32. Here I have followed Felstiner's translation; see Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 89.

33. Borges, *Obras Completas,* 110.

34. Badiou et al., *Paul Celan,* 55.

Thirteen • The Dialogue Continues: Heidegger Reads Celan's *Meridian,* 1960–1961

1. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 161; Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 48.

2. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 48.

3. Heidegger read an edition of the "Meridian" speech published in 1961 as a sixteen-page pamphlet with the title *Der Meridian: Rede anlässlich der Verleihung des Georg-Büchner-Preises. Darmstadt, am 22. Oktober 1960.* References to passages Heidegger marked cite the more accessible *GW* edition rather than his original version.

4. Translation from Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 409. In this chapter all translations from Celan's "Meridian" speech refer to Felstiner's translation and are cited parenthetically in the text as *SPP* followed by the page number.

5. Here I cite from Hertz's translation of Heidegger, *On the Way to Language,* 65.

6. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 48.

7. Here I cite from Macquarrie and Robinson's translation of Heidegger, *Being and Time,* 137–138. Subsequent translations from *Being and Time* in this chapter refer to this edition.

8. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 80.

9. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 48.

10. See Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 161.

11. Ibid.

12. Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 249; Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 162.

13. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 162.

14. Ibid.

15. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:209–210, 2:197–198.
16. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 176.
17. Text of letter reported by Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 59–60.

Fourteen • "An Epoch-Making Encounter": Freiburg and Todtnauberg, 1967

1. These articles from *Les temps modernes,* no. 4 (Jan. 1, 1946), are by Gandillac, "Entretien avec Martin Heidegger," 713–716; and Towarnicki, "Visite à Martin Heidegger," 717–724. Copies of each are found in Celan's posthumous library.
2. Reported in Gellhaus, "Marginalien," 46.
3. Letter located among Allemann's papers in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach.
4. See Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* esp. 37–39, 54, 91–95.
5. Doris Allemann, interview by the author, May 11, 1999.
6. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:543.
7. Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Franz Wurm,* 87.
8. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:547.
9. Ibid., 548.
10. Baumann cites this portion of an undated letter from Heidegger in *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 59–60.
11. The following account is based on Baumann's recollections in ibid., 62–68.
12. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 185 (quoting Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann).
13. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 69.
14. Pöggeler, "'Praktische Philosophie' als Antwort an Heidegger," 76, claims Silvio Vietta accompanied Neumann, Heidegger, and Celan, but Baumann makes no mention of his presence, nor does any commentator since, and Vietta himself has never acknowledged publicly that he was with them.
15. Krass, "'Mit einer Hoffnung auf ein kommendes Wort,'" 57.
16. Krass, "'Wir haben Vieles einander zugeschwiegen,'" 49.
17. Reported in Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 259.
18. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:550.
19. Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Franz Wurm,* 87–88.
20. See "Mitternacht einer Weltmacht," 110.
21. Heidegger, letter to *Der Spiegel.* The review of Alexander Schwan's *Politische Philosophie im Denken Heideggers* was published under the title "Mitternacht einer Weltmacht" in *Der Spiegel,* no. 7, Jahrgang 20 (Feb. 9, 1966): 110. Heidegger's reply was published in a letter to *Der Spiegel,* no. 11, Jahrgang 20 (March 7, 1966), 12.
22. See "'Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten.'"
23. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:550.
24. Pöggeler, "'Praktische Philosophie' als Antwort an Heidegger," 67.
25. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 70–71.
26. According to a note Celan made in an early version of his poem "Todtnauberg." See Celan, *Lichtzwang: Vorstufen, Textgenese, Endfassung,* 48.
27. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:559.
28. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 66.

29. Jantzen had died in February 1967. Heidegger's address is published in his *Gesamtausgabe,* 16:687–689.

30. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 71–72; Krass, "'Wir haben Vieles einander zugeschwiegen,'" 49.

31. Gadamer, *Wer bin Ich und wer bist Du?* 15.

32. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 78.

33. Ibid.

34. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 72, reporting on a telephone call from Kaschnitz to him.

35. Safranski, *Martin Heidegger,* 425.

36. This letter is found in the posthumous papers of Beda Allemann located in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, Germany.

37. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 68–72.

38. Ibid., 90.

Fifteen • "Todtnauberg" and Its Aftermath, 1967–1968

1. Celan, *Lichtzwang: Vorstufen, Textgenese, Endfassung,* 48.

2. Celan, *Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe,* 9:104.

3. This interpretation, which most Celan critics reject, comes from Bollack, "Vor dem Gericht der Toten." A fairly comprehensive list of interpretations of this poem until 1991 is found in Ziarek, *Inflected Language,* 181.

4. More than two dozen letters in Celan's correspondence with Franz Wurm discuss aspects of his reading works by or receiving treatment from Moshé Feldenkrais, a physicist and founder of a form of alternative behavior and neurological psychology. See also Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:475. Doris Allemann remembers Celan's reading many books in search of a cure (Allemann, interview by the author, May 11, 1999).

5. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 79.

6. For a representative account by a Parisian friend who heard Celan's negative reaction to the encounter with Heidegger see Daive, *La condition d'infini,* 152–153. A similar representative account by a German friend is found in Schwerin, "Bitterer Brunnen des Herzens," 79.

7. For the speech he gave before the Hebrew Writers Association on October 14, 1969, in which he made this claim, see *GW,* 3:203; a copy of the speech also appears in Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 414.

8. Shmueli and Sparr, *Paul Celan, Ilana Shmueli,* 14.

9. Shmueli, "Denk Dir. Paul Celan in Jerusalem," 22.

10. Françoise Meltzer claims Bonnefoy made this statement in a "personal communication" to her in October 1988; see Meltzer, *Hot Property,* 63.

11. Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Franz Wurm,* 93.

12. Ibid., 130–131.

13. See McDonnell, *The Bunker,* 99. I am indebted to Jerry Glenn for deciphering this allusion and giving me the source.

14. Emmerich, *Paul Celan,* 142.

15. For a representative example see Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 263.

16. Celan, *Das Frühwerk,* 62.

17. See the commentary in Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:158–159.

18. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 1:142.

19. Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 267.

20. Felstiner, *Paul Celan,* 247.

21. Unpublished letter in possession of Werner Weber. I want to thank Professor Weber for allowing me to look at the letters he received from Celan.

22. The earliest detailed study on this topic is Lyon, "Paul Celan and Martin Buber."

23. Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 409.

24. In a passage Celan underlined in his copy of *Heidegger: Denker in dürtiger Zeit,* Löwith asserts that Heidegger "denkt auf ein Kommendes hin," 43.

25. See Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Franz Wurm,* 88.

26. This usage is condensed in the lines from the poem "Breakers" ("Brandung"): "Where water is one can live once again, / can once again with death in chorus evoke the world through singing" (Wo Wasser ist, kann man noch einmal leben, / noch einmal mit dem Tod im Chor die Welt herübersingen, *GW* 1:69)

27. As Heidegger explains in a prefatory statement to *Wrong Paths,* these are forest paths, mostly overgrown, that come to a dead end. This usage is the source of the German phrase "auf dem Holzweg sein," meaning to be on the wrong path, or misguided, or on a dead-end path. Hence I follow the rendering of the term used in Osers's translation of Safranski's *Martin Heidegger* rather than the Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes translation, *Martin Heidegger: Off the Beaten Track.*

28. Celan, *Lichtzwang: Vorstufen, Textgenese, Endfassung,* 49.

29. Gellhaus, "'Seit ein Gespräch wird sind.'"

30. Ibid., 12.

31. Ibid., 13.

32. Ibid., 14.

33. Ibid., 15.

34. Altmann's recollection of the events surrounding this edition is inaccurate enough to make some of his statements questionable. He claims, for example, that Celan gave a poetry reading in Vaduz in August 1968 "and that it was one of his last readings, as he took his life several months later." Celan committed suicide in April 1970. And Altmann's conclusion that following the bibliophile edition of "Todtnauberg" that he printed, "It was certainly Celan's wish to cut off any kind of discussion with Heidegger," obviously does not conform to the fact that the two men continued to stay in touch. See Altmann, *Memoiren,* 64–68.

35. Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:575.

36. Baumann, who first published Heidegger's poem in 1992 in his *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 147–148, sees it in the context of Celan's poem, though perhaps only as an implicit response. France-Lanord's publication of this poem in 2004 makes it clear that he considers it to be an explicit response; see France-Lanord, *Paul Celan et Martin Heidegger,* 246–247. Stephan Krass, "'Mit einer Hoffnung auf ein kommendes Wort,'" 916, claims Heidegger wrote it as a "foreword" to Celan's poem.

37. Reported to this author in a letter from Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann, managing

editor of the *Gesamtausgabe: Ausgabe letzter Hand*, the edition of Heidegger's complete works that is still appearing. Von Hermann also dates this letter as being written immediately after Heidegger received the bibliophile edition of "Todtnauberg" from Celan in January 1968. He claims that because of the poem's highly personal nature, Heidegger did not send it to Celan.

38. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 80.

39. Schwerin, *Als sei nichts gewesen,* 355.

Sixteen • Heidegger's Thought and Language in Celan: Similarities, Affinities, Borrowings

1. Schöfer, *Die Sprache Heideggers,* 67–70.

2. See Günter Grass's wicked parody of Heidegger's language in his novel *Dog Years.* Grass suggests that Heidegger's perversion of the German language gave support to the ideological perversions of Nazism.

3. Rasula, "Paul Celan," 115.

4. Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger,* 62.

5. Fest, "Das Mädchen aus der Fremde," 143.

6. Because most of the words used as examples in this chapter are untranslatable, only the German original appears here.

7. Petzet, *Encounters and Dialogues,* 87.

8. Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* gives a partial translation of the last poem, which he entitles "A Rogues' and Gonifs' Ditty" (161).

9. Colin, *Paul Celan,* 119.

10. Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 251.

11. Ibid., 71.

12. See the poem "Mit Äxten spielend" (*GW* 1:89), which to my knowledge has not been translated. The title can be rendered as "Playing with Axes."

13. Perhaps the most notable are two "light experiences" he had with Nelly Sachs. The first, a mystical vision of sorts, occurred while they were seated together in a café in Zurich and is alluded to in the poem "Zürich, at the Stork" (see Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 141). The second, another "light experience," occurred while they were together a few days later in Celan's apartment in Paris. He refers to it in a note of June 17, 1960, printed in Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Nelly Sachs,* 42.

14. See, e.g., Burger, *Paul Celan.*

15. Steiner, "So Much Darkness Dispelled," 136.

16. Translation from Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 410.

17. Celan, *Das Frühwerk,* 100.

18. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 39.

19. Liska, "Wurzelgeflecht," 97.

20. Hamburger, *Paul Celan,* 283.

21. Schäfer, "Spuren von Heideggers Namen?"

22. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 56. Contrary to Pöggeler's claim, the source he identifies occurs in *Lectures and Essays,* not *On the Way to Language.* Celan's poem has not been translated into English.

23. Translation from Hofstadter, *Martin Heidegger*, 225.
24. Hamburger, *Paul Celan,* 169.
25. Translation from Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 319.
26. Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 249.
27. This translation relies on the rendering in Celan, *Glottal Stop,* 106.

Seventeen • Unresolved Contradictions: The Last Years, 1968–1970

1. Schwerin, *Als sei nichts gewesen,* 355.
2. Cited in Krass, "'Wir haben Vieles einander zugeschwiegen,'" 49.
3. Ibid.
4. Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 53–55; Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers,* 407.
5. See the poems "Aus dem Moorboden" (*GW* 2:389), translated as "To Climb from Marshy Soil," in Celan, *Last Poems,* 139; and "Hochmoor" (*GW* 2:390), translated as "Raised Bog," in Celan, *Glottal Stop,* 98. Celan wrote these poems on July 19 and 20, 1968, shortly after returning to Paris from this visit.
6. Krass, "'Wir haben Vieles einander zugeschwiegen,'" 49.
7. Baumann, " . . . Durchgründet vom Nichts . . . ," 286.
8. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 71–72.
9. Ibid., 78.
10. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 168.
11. Emmerich, *Paul Celan,* 146–152; see also Celan's letters to Wurm in Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Franz Wurm,* 146–151.
12. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 173–174.
13. Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 128.
14. Adorno's condemnation of Buber is according to Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts,* 247.
15. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 165–166; Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 57.
16. See Celan and Celan-Lestrange, *Correspondance,* 2:584–585.
17. Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers,* 340; Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 162; Pöggeler, "Celans Begegnung mit Heidegger," 126.
18. Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose,* 139.
19. Clemens Podewils, "Namen," 70.
20. Löwith, *Heidegger,* 109.
21. Washburn, introduction to *Last Poems,* xxxv.
22. Formulation by John Felstiner, lecture at Brigham Young University, April 12, 2001.
23. Located in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach, under call no. D 90.1.289.
24. Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Franz Wurm,* 239.
25. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 85, 131.
26. "Die 'absolute' Metapher," 188–225.
27. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 84–86.
28. Ibid., 48.
29. Ibid., 79.

30. Pöggeler, interview by the author, June 18, 1998.

31. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 79.

32. Wiedemann, *Paul Celan, Franz Wurm,* 240.

33. Shmueli and Sparr, *Paul Celan, Ilana Shmueli,* 135.

34. Baumann, *Erinnerungen an Paul Celan,* 79.

35. Ibid., 80.

36. Pöggeler, *Der Stein hinterm Aug,* 176–177; Pöggeler, "La conversación interrumpida," 49–50.

37. Pöggeler, "'Praktische Philosophie' als Antwort an Heidegger," 78.

Eighteen • A Conclusion of Sorts

1. Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers,* 398.

2. Pöggeler, for example, thinks that Heidegger probably did not grasp the significance of the poem "Todtnauberg," though he gives no substantial evidence for his claim. See Pöggeler, "'Praktische Philosophie' als Antwort an Heidegger," 78.

3. Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others,* 19.

4. Pöggeler, "'Praktische Philosophie' als Antwort an Heidegger," 67.

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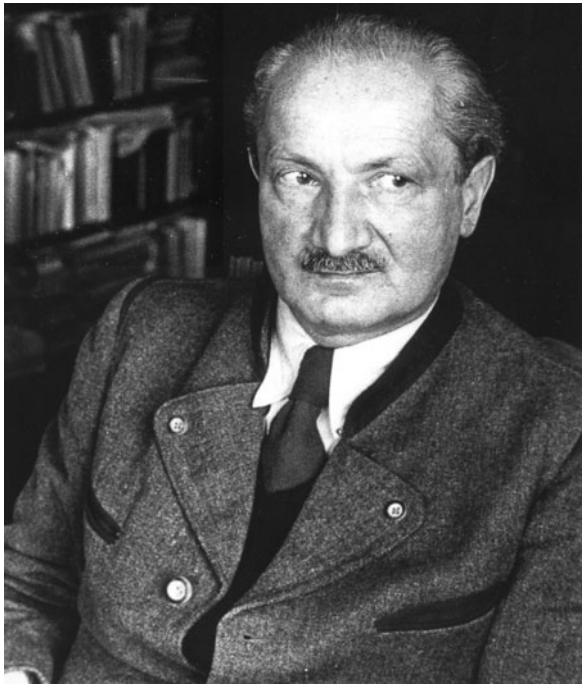
Martin Heidegger, 1930s (?). Photograph given by Heidegger to Hannah Arendt in 1950. Courtesy of Hermann Heidegger.



Heidegger (wearing a traditional Swabian jacket), 1950. Photograph by Hannah Arendt. Reproduced by permission of the Hannah Arendt Bluecher Literary Trust and the Schiller National Museum and Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach.

Heidegger delivering a commemorative lecture in honor of Abraham a Sancta Clara in Messkirch, Germany, May 2, 1964. Photograph courtesy of Hermann Heidegger.

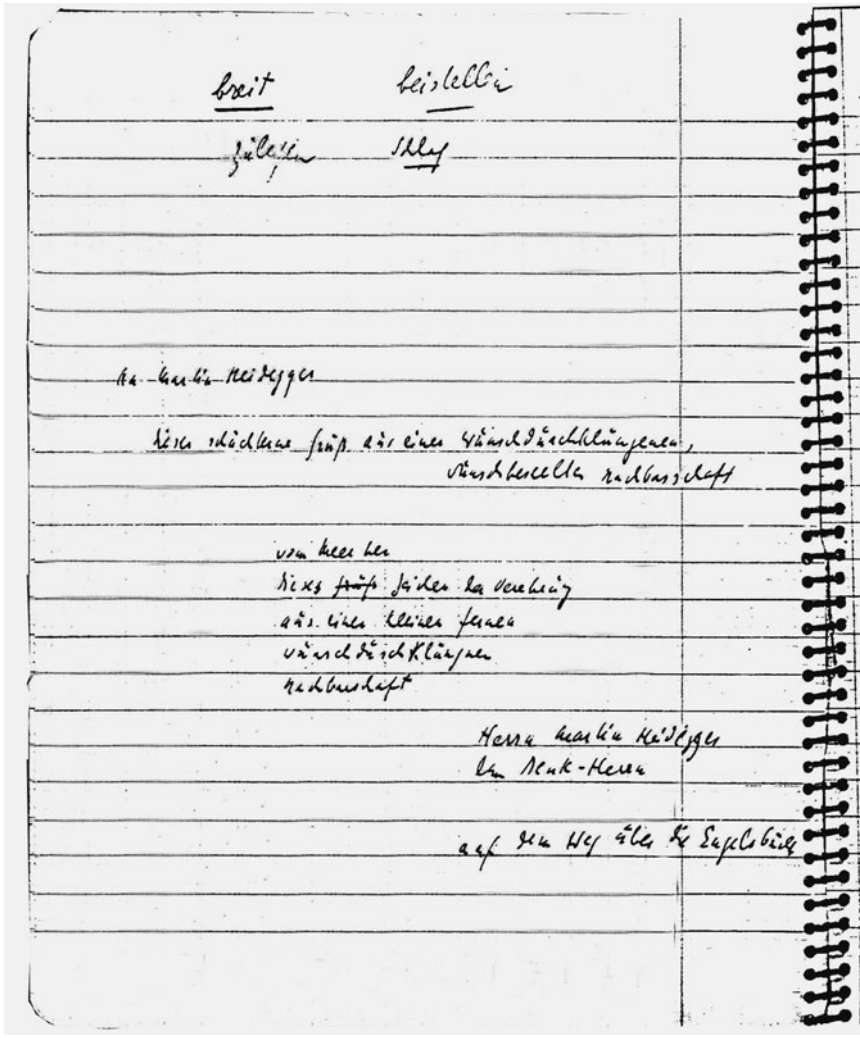
Paul Celan at his desk in Paris, 1955. Photograph by Gisèle Celan-Lestrange. Courtesy of Eric Celan.

somit die Wirklichkeit der Universität liegt jedoch nicht in einer von ihr ausgehenden, weil von ihr genährten und in ihr verwahrten geistigen Macht der ursprünglichen Einigung der Wissenschaften. Wirklich ist die Universität als eine Einrichtung, die noch in einer einzigartigen, weil verwaltungsmäßig geschlossenen Form das Auseinanderstreben der Wissenschaften in die Besonderung und die besondere Einheit der Betriebe möglich und sichtbar macht. Weil die eigentlichen Wesenskräfte der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaft unmittelbar eindeutig im Betrieb zur Wirkung kommen, deshalb können auch nur die eigenwüchsigen Forschungsbetriebe von sich aus die ihnen gemäße innere Einheit mit anderen vorzeichnen und einrichten.

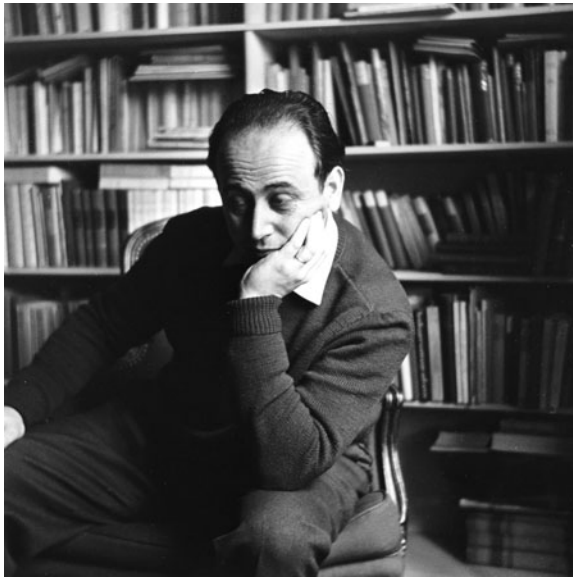
Das wirkliche System der Wissenschaft besteht in dem jeweils aus den Planungen sich fügenden Zusammenstehen des Vorgehens und der Haltung hinsichtlich der Vergegenständlichung des Seienden. Der geforderte Vorzug dieses Systems ist nicht irgend eine erdachte und starre inhaltliche Beziehungseinheit der Gegenstandsgebiete, sondern die größtmögliche freie, aber geregelte Beweglichkeit der Umschaltung und Einschaltung der Forschungen in die jeweils leitenden Aufgaben. Je ausschließlicher die Wissenschaft sich auf die vollständige Betreibung und Beherrschung ihres Arbeitsganges vereinzelt, je illusionsfreier diese Betriebe sich in abgesonderte Forschungsanstalten und Forschungsfachschulen verlagern, umso unwiderstehlicher gewinnen die Wissenschaften die Vollendung ihres neuzeitlichen Wesens. Je unbedingter aber die Wissenschaft und die Forscher mit der neuzeitlichen Gestalt ihres Wesens ernst machen, umso eindeutiger werden sie sich selbst und umso unmittelbarer für den gemeinen Nutzen bereitstellen können, umso vorbehaltloser werden sie sich aber auch in die öffentliche Unauffälligkeit jeder gemeinnützigen Arbeit zurückstellen müssen.

Die neuzeitliche Wissenschaft gründet sich und vereinzelt sich zugleich in den Entwürfen bestimmter Gegenstandsbezirke. Diese Entwürfe entfalten sich im entsprechenden, durch die Strenge gesicherten Verfahren. Das jeweilige Verfahren richtet sich im Betrieb ein. Entwurf und Strenge, Verfahren und Betrieb, wechselweise

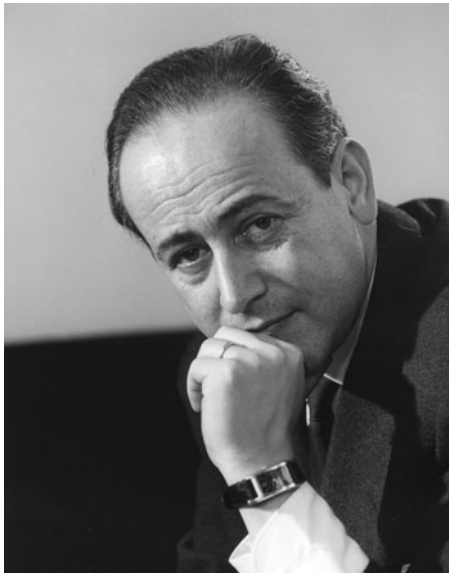
Facsimile page from Celan's personal copy of Heidegger's *Wrong Paths*, with markings made in July and August 1953. Courtesy of Eric Celan.



Facsimile page from a notebook of Celan's, with notes made while reading Heidegger's *What Is Called Thinking* in October 1954. Courtesy of Eric Celan.



Celan in his library in Paris, 1958. Photograph by Gisèle Celan-Lestrange. Courtesy of Eric Celan.



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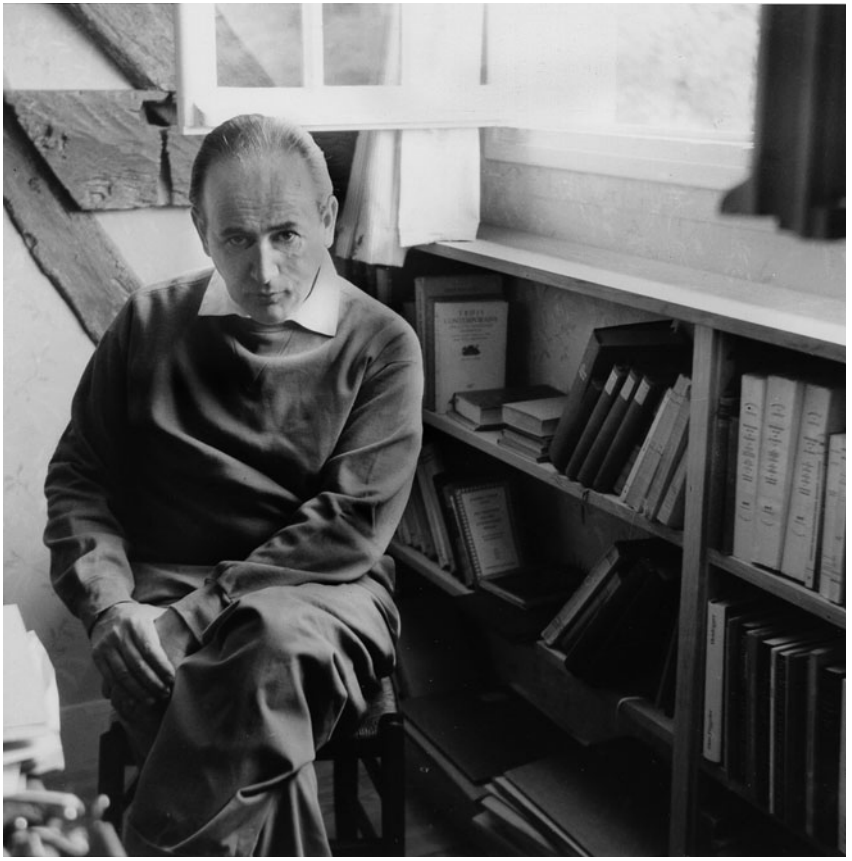
Heidegger in his library in Freiburg, Germany, September 23, 1966. Photograph by Digne Meller Marcovicz. Reproduced by permission.

Heidegger carrying water from a spring near his chalet in Todtnauberg, Germany, September 23, 1966. Photograph by Digne Meller Marcovicz. Reproduced by permission.

Heidegger standing by his chalet in Todtnauberg, September 23, 1966. Photograph by Digne Meller Marcovicz. Reproduced by permission.



Celan in his country home in Moisville, France, c. 1964–1966. Photograph by Gisèle Celan-Lestrange. Courtesy of Eric Celan.